



INTRODUCTION



Welcome to issue 11 of On't Road. Issue 11? I hear you think. You are right, there have been no previous issues of this specific zines. However, between 2000 and 2004 I worked with four friends of mine on a zine called waterintobeer; and we managed to release 10 issues of it. Therefore, I can legitimately carry on the numbers game, and re-start where I left off. Once again, welcome to issue 11 of On't Road.

Rationale

What do I enjoy most in life? Travelling and Punk Rock!

What do I enjoy reading about in zines? Travelling and Punk Rock!

What am I going to write about in my zine? Travelling and Punk Rock!

What do I hope this will inspire people to get into? Travelling and Punk Rock!

What will other people then write zines about? Travelling and Punk Rock? I hope so!

So why is it called On't Road?

Throughout my youth I never read any books. At primary school, we had to get a new book from the library every few weeks, and every time I would take home a factual book. I was asked on a few occasions by the 'librarian' to pick a

fictional book – I did – although I only did this to appease them, I never actually read any of those books, apart from the odd part. At high school, I tried reading an Adrian Mole book; I only managed a couple of chapters before I got bored. During GCSE English we had to read a set text. I never read any of them; I just revised off other people's notes and still managed to get a grade B. In the summer before I started college, my friend - Luke D (of waterintobeer fame) – gave me a copy of On the Road by Jack Kerouac. I was hooked after a few pages, and I must have finished it within a week. I loved the travel tales and the fact that the author wrote huge long paragraphs, which seized moments of his life before they went stale. I liked it how he had cocked-a-snoot at traditional writing methods in favour of his own; it proved to me that anyone can be a writer, no matter what your style. I loved it so much that I think I read it another five times within the year. Since then I have loved reading books, and I still read as much as I can. So that is why I called this zine On't Road, as an ode to Jack Kerouac for getting me into reading and consequently, writing. The words On the have been shortened to On't, which is typical 'don't waste your breath' Yorkshire speak, merging two words into one. The word On't helps to portray my regional identity, and it makes the name of my zine not a complete rip-off of Kerouac's masterpiece.

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Next Issue

I have been making, contributing to and reading zines for 10 years now, and one thing I have learnt is that there is no use in promising anything because it often never happens. However, there will be an issue 2, and it will include the following things (I hold these truths because I have already written the articles): Travelling in St. Kitts & Nevis – November 2007, Summer 2008 touring with Hero Dishonest, Sotatila & Pisschrist, and an article about the resurgence of the Manic Street Preachers.

Contact Information

Write to me if you want somewhere to stay in Leeds, if your band wants a UK tour or a gig in Leeds/Bradford, you want to trade/buy a zine(s), you want to give some feedback, want a game of darts, require some travel advice, or just want to say hello. Email: ska1ska@yahoo.com. Send records, zines, cheap tobacco, and unwanted Bad Religion records to: **On't Road, 14 Hesse Mount, Hyde Park, Leeds, LS6 1EP, United Kingdom**. It might be worth emailing me first to confirm current address. Add me on Myspace: www.myspace.com/positivebastard

Thanks

Isabel (for support), Linda from The Big Boost (for money), Jordan (for the cover) (suckthebullet@hotmail.com), Hero Dishonest (for taking me on tour), all those who bought waterintobeer fanzine, all those who gave me encouragement to start another zine, to those who gave me feedback on my writing, and to all the zinesters worldwide.

THE UK ZINE SCENE

The last regular big UK zine **Last Hours** has fallen by the wayside. I spoke to Edd (the editor) recently and he told me that everyone involved is now busy with other projects, and that they don't have time and energy to carry on with it. It is a shame as it combined elements of former big zines **Reason to Believe** and **Fracture**. This leads me on nicely to a new zine by Monk Dave, the former co-editor of **Fracture**. It is called **Next Stop Nowhere** and it features a fascinating extensive report on Dave's adventures with Black Cougar Shock Unit on their USA tour (dave@thenewestindustry.com). Falling into the roles of most regular UK zines falls to **Artcore** (flw@ntlworld.com) which is always full of excellent reviews, interviews, recently with free records and **Suspect Device** (suspectdevicehq@hotmail.com) which is now in its 49th issue! The best D-Beat Crust zines come in the form of **Agitate** (chirsagitate@yahoo.co.uk) which is black and white, cut and paste, now into double figures and **Attitude Problem** (theveganwarrior@yahoo.com), which is all hand written, and appears annually. The long running Leeds zine **Bald Cactus** (baldcactus@gmail.com) is now up to issue 26, and is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a free tea bag! It covers all things punk-rock. One of my favourite zines **Gadgie** (mrgadgie@hotmail.com) is still going strong, with its dose of humorous stories, and Marv will soon be releasing a book featuring all his favourite stories from over the years. He has also collaborated with other zines, celebrating the 20th anniversary of DIY punk gigs in Boston that are held at the Indian Queen, aptly called **This is Boston (not Boston)**. Fellow collaborator Steve of **Rum Lad** zine fame (www.stevelarder.co.uk) has also released a comic featuring Rick Ta Life carrying out everyday tasks. **In it On it Zine** (paul@initonit.plus.com) from nearby Peterborough is still going strong, featuring an unhealthy dose of punk rock ranting. A similar zine that has just started is called **Misery & Gin** (porkiepiggy@gmail.com). There are loads more zines in the UK to check out, such as **Beat Motel** and **Zonked**, just take a look at the reviews in other fanzines to find out about others.

HERO DISHONEST

UK TOUR - SEPTEMBER 2005

Back in May, whilst visiting Poland, I was fortunate to see Hero Dishonest play three gigs. After some drunken gentle persuasion, I managed to assure and persuade them that it would be viable and fun to come over to England in the autumn. 4 months down the line, the tour was booked, and I was heading down to London Stanstead airport in a van with my mate Steve Hyland.

They arrived around midnight, and after warm greetings it was off to find a place to stay. Steve had recently made some contacts that lived in a squat situated in East Ham, London. The building, named 'Suttongrad', is an old cheese factory, where around 30 people lived. The place had 3 separate buildings, and a huge courtyard, which had a large communal garden. It was a lot different to other punk squats I had visited because it had a large community of Roma/Gypsy, Travellers and families living there. The courtyard was full of caravans, wagons and large vehicles. Upon arrival, we were treated to some rather bland vegetarian slop, which we were very grateful for. We stayed up for a while drinking, listening to old Finnish pop music, and talking to the locals, who told us more about the place. They kindly provided us with a large dark room to sleep in, which was fortunately full of mattresses.

The plan was to spend a day in London, however after a late night of drinking; we didn't manage to leave until 4pm. This was after we spent an hour looking for Jussi's camera, which he had lost. A rather dull journey round the M25, and then into Reading, and we arrived a little late. Tim organised the gig, which was in an intimate and small room, at the Kings Tavern pub. It was good to see all the people again that I had met on the Valhalla Pacifists / Burning the Prospect / MC Positive Bastard tour. Crash the Pose, who play thrash, were awesome as usual, with Ellis providing amusing anecdotes between songs. New band from Southampton, Whole in the Head, made the journey up, and they were a treat. Hero

Dishonest went down well, and there was a fair amount of participation from the crowd, with the singer Vellu, being his usual crazy self on the dance floor. Hero Dishonest are now only the one singer and it works fine live, despite the dual vocals on the records.

After the gig, we headed back to the squat in London. We got stupidly drunk in the van, and carried on the action when we arrived back. The night was spent drinking Fissu, which is made by putting a packet of Fishermans Friend mints inside a bottle of Vodka, and shaking it about for an hour so it mixes. The resulting drink is ultra-menthol, and means that the vodka can be drunk neat with far more ease. These are the kind of things Finnish people think up during those long winter nights.

Saturday was an early start as we had to be in Bradford by 1pm, as I was organising the gig with Ewan Frater. Due to Murphy letting Hero Dishonest crash his gig the following day, I returned the favour by letting his band, Feeding Frenzy, play first. Murphy started the set by spraying a bottle of water over the predominantly crust crowd and telling them to get a wash, brilliant. Sharing the bill for the second year running were Homo Consumens and See You in Hell from the Czech Republic. A lot of people turned out early to see these bands. Homo Consumens were decent, however See You in Hell take themselves far too seriously as a crust band, especially the singer who is always staring with wide open eyes and pointing to his head. These two bands had played Scotland the night before and were due to play Boston that night. I offered them the gig as a favour, it was on their route and they are the type of bands who want to play the 1 in 12 club. They started to leave straight away after they played, and Filip from Homo Consumens came up to me for some money. I offered them £30 because the attendance was not as good as I thought it would be, and as a gesture of thanks for them coming to play. Filip then demanded that "2 touring Czech bands is £100, and this is what people pay on the continent". I did this as a favour and he was being really arsey about it. In the end, I generously gave them £50, and

Filip still walked away in a huff without saying thank you. Maybe there was a mix-up with the tour organiser, because I never offered any money to them to play. Either that or he was a complete arsehole. [Note - I have spoken to Filip since, and we have sorted things out]

Other bands that played were: Braindead from Leicester, who were fast. Last Under The Sun, who are a lot faster live than on record, and didn't go down too well as their style of music was the black swan in the pond. The Mingers, who were the local representation. Burning the Prospect, who sounded tighter and crustier than ever, and Filthpact from Scotland, who were on their last gig of a 2 week European tour.

It was great to finally play the 1 in 12 club as MC Positive Bastard, and after a brief rant about Nike shoes in hardcore, I proceeded to give a rendition of 'Crazy in Bradford'. Hero Dishonest headlined, and played a great set of old and new songs. A lot of people were dancing too, which annoyed me because I was in charge of the 'merchandise' stand for the tour. I never got to dance at any of the gigs on the tour. I think at this time of my life I was too shy or polite to ask other people if they didn't mind watching out for it. On the whole this was a good gig, certainly the best of the tour, except there could have been 20-30 more people there to 'pack it out' and made sure the touring bands got paid better money. On a happier note, where else is better in the UK to spend a Saturday night of punk-rock action? There aint no better place than the 1 in 12 club, I tell thee!

After the gig, some people went straight back to my place for some peace and quiet, whilst the rest of us went to Omars for a curry, a fitting end to a good night. I felt ill a few days later, and a week down the line I found out that about two thirds of the people who went out for a curry that night also got food poisoning. I am never going to Omars again; Internationale is a much better curry house anyhow.

The next morning I had to get up at 9am to play in a 'waterintober FC' football match; it

was early on in the season, so we probably lost the game quite badly. When I got home, everybody was awake, so we had some breakfast and listened to records for a while. It was a short one hour drive that evening to Hull, where we were treated to some lovely falafel made by the girlfriend of Murphy. Before the gig we bought some fishermans friend and vodka for the drive home.

Prior to the gig starting, Walk the Plank and other members of the touring scouse brigade insisted that they used their own P.A. even though there was a P.A. and a local soundman in the venue. In the end, an agreement that both systems were to be used was made, causing unnecessary delay to the start of the gig. Feeding Frenzy played first to their home crowd, followed by the first scouse band, Short Sharp Shock. Two months ago I played here at The Ringside on the Pacifists / Prospect tour and the place was packed, and it was probably the best gig of the tour. This time, the attendance was decent (especially for a Sunday), but nowhere near as busy. This gig had two of the allegedly most popular hardcore punk bands in the country and a touring Finnish band playing, and it wasn't that busy. Much respect to Murphy for the gig, it was probably just one of them nights (kids/students back to school, last weekend before payday). I sang Crazy in Hull, but it was nowhere near as much fun as the last time I played there.

Hero Dishonest went down well with the predominantly young crowd and sounded exceptionally loud due to the double PA. As Mikko stated before they played, they travelled 6,000 miles to play in Hull, and as thanks, most of the travelling scouse lot pissed off out of the room when they played. I can see why people are starting to loose respect for some of these people, when they have an attitude like this. Walk the Plank played next and they were pretty decent, yet they must be one of the most over-rated and bummed out bands in the hardcore scene today. The Down and Outs were the best band of the scouse three, but they didn't manage to impress most people, and things went downhill after the thrill of opening with a Black Flag cover. Too much Black Flag in

hardcore. If Welly in Artcore fanzine describes Hardskin as Oi! music for middle class white punks; when describing The Down and Outs do you think he would just change the word 'punks' to 'hardcore kids'?

After the gig we drank Fissu in the van on the way home, and had a few more drinks when we got home to my place. I was pretty drunk, so I passed out fairly early, as others drank into the night. The next day Steve and I dropped them off at London Stanstead airport for their flight home, and drove back to Leeds that evening. On the way home we reminisced about the tour, talked about personal things and about exploring Finnish places. On the whole it was a good short tour, everyone had fun, Hero Dishonest got to play two new places, and we covered our petrol money and van hire costs. As they departed they said that they will be back within a few years for a longer tour encompassing Ireland, Scotland and Wales too. I look forward to this time, watch this space!

THE POLICE BASTARDS

The Police, some people love them, most people hate them. Most people have an amusing story when it comes to dealing with the police, and throughout the next few issues of On't Road I plan to share some of these stories. Here we have a collection of three stories from my youth, enjoy.

THIS LOT MADE A RIGHT COCK N BALLS OF THE SITUATION

I've had many encounters with the police, mostly bad ones. The most humorous occasion was one Sunday night in Leeds City Centre back in 2000. We were at a 'friend of a friends' birthday party at a swanky bar, which was not the usual kind of place that us roustabouts would hangout. As per usual, during a night on the town, a fight broke out. We had run out of alcohol and money, so we decided that it

was the best time to leave.

On our way out of the bar and onto the street, our drunken mate Jonty noticed the unmanned police van that had been called to the scene, and started to draw pictures on the dirty exterior. Suddenly, we were all at it, and it was worse than the usual stuff, such as 'Wash Me' and 'I wish my wife was this dirty'. As we were frantically putting to good work our artistic skills, it reminded me of a scene Monty Python's 'Life of Brian'. The part where Brian gets caught painting graffiti on the emperor's castle walls, and then is ordered to write it again one thousand times, in correct grammar, resulting in the castle being covered with the words 'Romans Go Home'. By the end of our session, the van was covered in messages such as; ACAB, Cop Killer, Police Bastard, Fuck the Police, and PC Piggy; alongside various sexually explicit drawings.

We walked away triumphantly in a fit of laughter, until I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was the Old Bill, and they had got us. They took our names and addresses and checked our identity with their colleagues back in the sty. Then they said that we had to clean all the graffiti off the van if we didn't want to spend the night in a cell. Instead of getting our hands and clothes dirty, we spat on the van, took our shoes off, and used the bottom of them to clean it off. It was a bold move that surprisingly the coppers didn't object to.

After we had finished they gave us the mandatory telling off. It was then that I realised that the T-shirt I was wearing had a large print of the Doom 'Police Bastard' 7" cover on it. Again, it surprisingly didn't bother them or they were too unconcerned to notice. After we got our marching orders, we walked away, cursing the police to one another. Two minutes later, the van drove past us. The last laugh was ours, as they hadn't checked all of the van, and we noticed a giant picture of a cock and balls was still on the back door.

THE STY STRIKES BACK

6 It had been a productive day. In the morning

I had attended a protest march against the Iraq War. In the afternoon we occupied the University of Manchester Maths building and had it shut down for the rest of the day. In the evening there was a critical mass, followed by a mass road blockade. I was on a high.

I stopped by the library on my way home. When I left, there were still lots of police around, clearing the last of the protestors. I was riding my bike down the street, and a copper on a motorbike rode up by my side. He told me to get some lights on my bike. I cockily told him to 'Fuck Off!' He told me to pull over. I accelerated and the chase began. I sprinted down the street, and onto a pedestrian area, which was guarded by bollards, which were there to stop motor vehicles entering. To my surprise, he followed.

I turned down another street and he was hot on my tail. I attempted an emergency stop, in hope that he would zoom past. The thick cunt decided to drive straight into the back of me. I flew off my bike onto the road, and the back tyre had been severely buckled. Luckily, I was unhurt. As I got to my feet, he grabbed my wrist tightly, and held me until the van he radioed had arrived. I was piled into the van, along with my bike, and taken to a downtown police station. I was interviewed, photographed, and had my finger prints taken. I left with a court summons and a broken bike that I had to carry on my shoulders for 2 miles, all the way home.

In the weeks preceding the case I was unable to obtain CCTV footage of the event, or get free representation in court. I accepted that trying to fight the police in court is similar to asking New Labour to adopt socialist policies. Almost impossible!

I was charged with 'Failure to use a bicycle without lights'. I couldn't have pleaded not guilty, because they had photos of my bike without lights on. I guess the copper could have charged me with more, yet he probably knew that I couldn't get out of this charge. In court, I pleaded guilty and I received a fine of £20! What a waste of the police and courts

time / money.

The moral of the story is one I learned a few months later. A police car pulled me over and asked where my bike lights were. I told them that the batteries had run out and that I was on my way to buy some more. They said OK and then drove off. So the right thing to do is play dumb, agree with them, and show remorse. 'Yes Sir, Yes Sir, Three bags full Sir' is far more productive than 'Fuck Off, You Pig Bastard!'

THE ARRANGED MARRIAGE OF THE PAPERBOYS IN THE WOODS

I was 12 years old, it was my first year at high school. It was a difficult age. The usual fun of sleepovers and playing in the same street was starting to wear thin. I was at high school, I wanted to do more 'grown up' and exciting things, I was stuck between - being a child and a teenager.

At that time I lived in the Chelwoods in Roundhay, Leeds. The people I hung out with most were Callum (my age), and his older brother Phillip. By this time we had already started doing more risky things. For example, sneaking out of the suburbs and taking a bus into town on a Saturday afternoon. We would walk around and browse in shops, even though we never had any money. The highlight of the day usually involved spending the bus fare change on a can of coke or a packet of Seabrooks crisps, and then sitting on a bench looking at girls. Cheap kicks!

On the day in question, we decided to sleep out in the woods. We carried out the classic trick of telling our own parents that we were staying at each others house. We stayed so often at each others houses that our parents stopped checking up on us. With this in mind, it seemed like our plan was foolproof.

That evening we 'played out' a few blocks away, so to ensure that our parents wouldn't catch on. When it got to our curfew time of 9pm, we started to walk around and check out potential sleeping spots. We went to the local rugby club, too close to home. Allerton Grange

High School, too open. Roundhay Park, too dodgy. It was getting late, so we settled on the woods next to the ring road. These woods were only populated by morning dog walkers, they were dense but open, and not too far from home. 'Perfect' we thought.

Usually when we stayed at each others houses, even when the lights were turned out, we would stay up as late as possible, telling stories and giggling at every stupid thing under the sun. There would always come a point when the parents would come in and give us a final warning. There was always a final pointless laugh, before lying awake in silence until nature took its toll and we fell asleep.

On this night, there were no guardians, aside from the trees. We congregated inside a little enclosure of bushes, told stupid stories and laughed as loud as we liked. At times, someone would hear something, tell everyone to be quiet, and soon after realise that it was a something in passing or a small animal.

This part of the story reminds me of a book I once read entitled 'Clan of the Cave Bear', surprisingly about a clan that existed during the cave times. At a certain point in a boy's life he would be left out on the plains overnight, and if he survived on his own then he would ascend to adulthood. However, the author claimed that the father would be on guard nearby in case there was any trouble. The fact that the child does not know this, authenticates the experience.

It was late into the night, and we were beginning to get tired. We heard the usual ruffling of dead autumn leaves that suddenly turned into footstep. In our paranoia we became stone cold silent, there was nobody nearby to protect us. Despite our silence, and stiff, fearful bodies, a being came up to our enclosure, repeating the word 'hello'. He sat down and introduced himself as Sanjit. He was Asian, and was in his 20s. He began to tell us how he had ran away from home because his parents were trying to force him into an arranged marriage with a girl he didn't like. In our fearful state, all we could offer in return

were comments like 'Oh that's bad' and 'Are you OK?'

He then lit a cigarette and told us how his parents had been beating him because of his refusal of marriage, and he showed us a cut on his face. Despite his humanitarian need for comradeship, we were in total fear as to what might happen. We initially listened to every word that came out of his mouth. We were scared children; he was in total control, the master in command of the situation.

And then he grabbed Phil and started to put his hand down his trousers. We screamed like a morning alarm clock. No! He didn't really, but I bet there is some sick fucker reading this who was hoping that the story would take that direction. Why else do you think memoirs of child abuse get to number one in the book charts?

I don't recall anything else that happened or what was said at the time. Eventually he left and told us to stay safe, and we returned the sentiment. The situation dominated the conversation for the rest of the night, as we drifted in and out of sleep. Once he had left, we weren't fearful anymore.

By sunrise we had grown bored of sitting around. We decided to go for a walk around the streets until it was a legitimate time to go home. As we were walking by the ring road, out of nowhere, a police car pulled up beside us. They were obviously curious as to why three scruffy looking kids were wondering around the streets at 6am on a Sunday morning.

They asked us what we were doing. I told them that we were on the way to do my paper round (which normally didn't start till 8am on Sundays and at the time I didn't have one). Yet for others and myself it was quite common for us to accompany each other on each other's rounds.

The policewoman countered by asking why we looked so scruffy, and why there was dirt on our clothes. As the spokesperson, I came back with some lame excuse that about how we

had a play fight in a garden on the way to the newsagent. The PC said she didn't believe us.

As I was thinking about the next move, Phillip (who was at 13 years old, a fan of cooking, games workshop and painting, and whom my mother had a strong suspicion of being gay – he is what's known in some circles as being a 'soft lad') came out and blabbed the truth to the police. I immediately called him a 'dick head', which proved our guilt and we were piled into the back of the police car.

Callum and Phillip were dropped home first, and their mum looked unimpressed. She cast me a disgusted look as they walked through the door. I was usually deemed the troublemaker, so I showed no concern. For some reason my parents hadn't woken up when the police knocked on the door. I said that I had a key, so they let me go in without informing my parents.

I thought that I had gotten away with it. That was until later that morning when I saw their mother 'Elaine' walking up the driveway. At that point I knew I was in big trouble.

This was the first time I had stayed outside all night, heard a strangers harsh life problems, and got into trouble with the police. It turned out to be the final straw for Callum & Phillips parents, and I was subsequently banned from seeing them ever again. Despite the punishment that followed, I think I subconsciously grew up that night. I eventually got over never seeing them again as I was moving to Harrogate with my mum a few weeks later. It was there in the rich suburbs, where I took with me my new sense of 'adulthood' and began my period of being a mischievous teenager. And that folks, is another story, for another time.

This collection of police stories was written whilst travelling from Chicago to Philadelphia in November 2006. Look out for more tales in the next issue, and feel free to contribute your own.

HERO DISHONEST

USA Tour - Autumn 2006

I never had any particular interest in traveling to the USA. I was saving up to go to south East Asia at the time. One cold winter's day in Leeds, I got a text message from Vellu whilst I was at work. He said that his girlfriend was too sick to go on tour, and invited me to go along with them. I had spent 4 months booking a 2 week UK & Ireland tour for RUIDOSA INMUNDICIA, and I was planning to tour with them for a week. They cancelled a week before it started. A week later I got this offer from Hero Dishonest, so I took it as some kind of reward for all the hard work I had put in to booking a tour. As this was an opportunity I may never get again, I decided I should not look the gift horse in the mouth, and accept their offer. The next day I quit my job, bought a flight ticket, and then 4 days later I was on a plane to Chicago.

What follows is a report on the Hero Dishonest tour of the USA in 2006. The majority of it was written during the tour for an online blog. I have decided to keep it mostly unchanged in order to preserve the true feelings I had at the time.

19/10/06

Lasse arrived yesterday after a 22 hour train ride from New York. When he arrived at the FOURTH ROTOR house, I dressed in a disguise and pretended to be Jack from Texas. It took him about 5 seconds to realise that it was me, much to his surprise, because nobody told him that I was coming. In fact, the decision for me to come on tour in the USA was made 5 days before it started. I had to quit my job. Hitherto, this has been the right decision.

We left Chicago yesterday evening and travelled in Doug's Dodge Van to the gig (not show) in MADISON. We stopped off a petrol station, and I couldn't resist getting an XL size ROOT BEER for 75 cents. Needless to say that 10 minutes later I was laying in the van with

stomach pains. The gig was in a warehouse space called 'MIERDEVERDE'. When we arrived, the promoters told us that they had made 13 dollars from can recycling, and asked us what alcohol we wanted with it. That was a good start; it made me feel that I hadn't left the alcohol culture of Europe.

The first band to play was called MURDER OF CROWES, the band of the promoter. They were followed by COP EATER, great name for a band. ACTS OF SEDITION, who are joining us on tour played next, and HERO DISHONEST headlined. The acoustics in the room were pretty sketchy, as was the PA system, so the sound didn't do any justice for the bands. It was an all ages gig, and there were plenty of kids 'bringing the mosh' during the bands. Drinking lots seems like the norm in MADISON. After the show we headed to Robert (the tour organisers) house in MILWAUKEE, drank a little, and then hit the sack in the early hours.

One of the funniest things I have seen so far: A man in a suit in Philadelphia airport reading a 'how to get ahead and be successful in business' books. He had a highlighter pen in his hand, and when I glanced over I noticed that he was highlighting every line on the page.

One of the funniest things I have heard so far: A man and his wife are on a game show, something about 'how well do you know your partner'; where both people have to get the answer correct to get points. The host asks the wife "Where is the strangest place you have had sex?" and she replies, "Uh, In the Butt!"

I am looking forward to more insanity in the Land of the Free Time.

20/10/06

Yesterday we visited a restaurant called COSMO in downtown MILWAUKEE, and ate tasty vegan bbq ribs. We checked out BULLSEYE RECORDS, and a wacky toy shop that had Adolf Hitler dolls on sale for 85 dollars. For the rest of the afternoon we sat around in the bar and drinking beer.

Back at Roberts's house, I visited an institution called ACHILLES. This is a toilet in the basement, where participants are encouraged to use the Polaroid camera and take a picture of their shit. The walls are covered in signed polaroids of various peoples turd. I added a couple to the collection, and after I finished, signed the guestbook, and took a badge which says "I shitted on Achilles".

The gig was at a student house on CHAMBERS STREET. It was only a couple of blocks away from Roberts's house, yet we still did things the American way and drove there. The bands played in the basement, and there was a party upstairs. Just like in Madison, the majority of the people at the gig were in their teens. This meant that there was plenty of energy in the place and copious amounts of alcohol. Roberts's band, HIGH ON CRIME, played first. They were fast, loud, and heavy. All the necessary ingredients for a good band. HERO DISHONEST followed, and unlike yesterday, most of the songs they played were from the new album. They got a good reception, and were cheered back on for an encore. The crowd highlight of the set was when everyone piled on Clint from ACTS OF SEDITION. They followed and were equally enjoyed by the local partygoers. The last band to play was called HEALTH, from Los Angeles. They went against the grain of the nights music and played noisy experimental screaming stuff, with lots of instrument changeovers.

Upstairs the party continued late into the night. At first it seemed like it was going to be a Computer Game party, as there was a Street Fighter 2 machine in the lounge, and a Nintendo in the corner. However, the place soon filled up and the beer flowed. Hero Dishonest introduced 'Fissu' to Milwaukee, and most people weren't into it. Fissu is Fishermans Friend mints dissolved into a bottle of Vodka. We took a walk through the mean streets of Milwaukee, back to Roberts place. There was a store on the corner that had a sign saying 'Still Black Owned', and there was dudes smoking crack pipes in the garages. When we got back to eat, Lasse had already made his way back to the party and Robert genuinely warned

him not to get shot. This was Milwaukee ghetto through and through. Back at the party the attendance was dwindling, and much to everyone's disappointment the most people had already left. So, we just got more wasted, and conducted lewd interviews that were too explicit for any zine publisher. Vellu dived on the living room table, and spilt everything on the floor. This was the funniest event at the party. I left the others at the party and managed to get back to Roberts about 4am, dodging bullets and avoiding crack heads, to find the best bed in the guest room free. So I slept well that night. Robert took great care of us, and fed us well. A great guy, we all hope to see again.

Sickest thing I have seen so far: A video of a 'well hung' horse fucking a local guy to death. It put me right off my breakfast.

21/10/06

We left Roberts in the morning, after having potatoes and broccoli for breakfast. We drove to Chicago, and hung out there for a while. Doug went to work, and we picked up the extra car that we are borrowing from Jake of Fourth Rotor. During the ride to MUSKEGON the trailer got a flat tyre, so we had to wait around for a while and drink beer whilst the others drove to Wal-Mart to buy a new tire! I guess they can be useful for some things. The gig was in a large basement of a house where a load of young punk kids lived. The curfew was 10 o'clock, so we set up straight away, and Acts of Sedition played first, followed by Hero Dishonest. Many of the teenagers were wasted on beer, and were dancing around to the bands. In Finnish I would describe some of the crowd as 'Liian Nuori, Liian Natti'. Even the redneck neighbours came along for some fun. The wife let me wear her cowboy hat, and they left without it. Unfortunately they came back later to retrieve it. After the band, a young kid played some solo songs. Some angry political type stuff. He was young and enthusiastic, and much to my delight, played the inevitable Against Me cover. I think he got a bit carried away when he played Time of Your Life by Green Day. Apparently we were supposed to

stay at the sound mans house, whose name is Jake Hitler, and used to be heavily involved with the neo-nazi movement. So we decided to drive to GRAND RAPIDS instead, and avoid this Roger Rabbit look-a-like. Muskegon is one fucked up small town. We had fun though.

In Grand Rapids we stayed with Ryan from I OBJECT, and his girlfriend Clare. Ma Halujn Sen Muijaa. In the morning we hung out and ate some breakfast, and then went to the coffee shop to hang out for a few hours. Clare cooked us a lovely stir-fry, and then the show started. It was in the basement of their house, and to get in there, you had to go through a trapdoor in the kitchen. Many people showed up and some even had to stand outside because it was so packed. Lasse and I had decided to have our first night off the drink. Whilst watching the first band he said, 'I don't feel right being at a punk-rock show without a beer in my hand, do you wanna go get some beer. I hastily agreed and moments later we were back with a party pack of cider, beer and white russians. Ryan invited a local Christian punk band to play in order to try and get them to see that what they believe in is bullshit. Before they played their last song, the singer (who had a patch saying 'evolution is a lie') denounced his faith. A truly revolutionary punk rock moment. Ryan and Claire's band 'Fuck This' played awesome fast hardcore, and they were playing their Demo Release show. Acts of Sedition and Hero Dishonest both played good sets, and the basement was still overflowing. After the show the kids gradually filtered out of the house, and we carried on drinking. Some people settled down to watch a movie, including this really annoying self-righteous hippy girl. Earlier in the day I was sat next to her looking at a picture book about knitted underwear, and she cocked-a-snoot in my direction to show her disapproval. Fucking stupid! As some people wanted to sleep, the party animals, Lasse, Clint, Alex, and I, went for a walk to a downtown bar. Pints were only 2 dollars, so we got royally wasted and talked about Heavy Metal. We ended up causing mischief on the way home by putting signs in places they shouldn't be. At one point we swapped a democrat sign for a republican sign

between two neighboring houses. We drank some more on the porch back home before passing out. For some reason I felt totally fine in the morning, this is surprising after drinking 20 beers the day before. Oh yeah, and not to forget the weather, its fucking cold! Good job I brought my long johns.

26/10/06

We took a long drive from Grand Rapids to PITTSBURGH that lasted about 8 hours. I bought a foot-long sandwich from the gas station, and stole some soda. For the majority of the drive, Lasse and I shared stories about embarrassing encounters with women. This made the hangover more bearable. We made a stop off in ANN ARBOR, Michigan. This place is famous for being the birth place of Iggy Pop & The Stooges, and MC5. We visited a vegetarian cafe called THE JERUSALEM GARDEN. I drank coffee and the others ate falafel. Food & beverages are so cheap in the USA. No wonder people are so fat!

The gig was at the Mr. Robotto Project, which is a volunteer run, punk-rock community space. This was the first place we visited, where drinking alcohol was not permitted at the 'show'. It was a decent turn out for a Monday night. Unfortunately we got there too late and missed the first band, NIGHT TERROR. The next local band to play was called WARZONE WOMYN, and featured Maximum Rock n' Roll columnist 'Mantooth' on vocals. How about that for a bit of name dropping? They played heavy hardcore, and there was even a mosh pit for a few songs. I was so hungry that I went out and bought some Chinese soup. Hero Dishonest was now sounding a lot tighter, and this was the best they have sounded so far. Unfortunately there was a large break to repair the drum stool, and then a drum skin broke, so the set was cut slightly short. After the show we headed back to Andy's house. He had organised the gig for us. We ate some food, and hung out for a bit. Some of the others went to a local bar, and then on to smoke some pot. I needed to have a night off the drink, after drinking heavily for the last few days. So I stayed at the house and got an early night.

We ate pancakes for breakfast and then set off to BUFFALO, New York. We had to get a new wheel for the trailer. The mechanic thought he had one, yet when he tried to put it on, it was too big. Apparently it had been stored on the wrong rack. During this farce, Jussi and I went to the local pizza store, and shared a large pizza. There was one last stop at a drum centre, and we finally arrived in Buffalo 5 hours later. 10 days earlier, Buffalo had been a victim of severe gales & snows storms. Many people had died, and some were without power for as long as a week. Due to the depth of the snow, and it being autumn, most of the city's trees, which traditionally have lined the streets, had collapsed. This is quite a large spread of destruction, considering 500,000 people live in Buffalo and surrounding areas. Whilst we were there, the relief trucks were still out in force, collecting debris.

We unloaded the gear immediately, and then Lasse and I went immediately to the gas station to buy beer. We got ID'd, and the jackass attendant was insisting we get a state ID card because it looked dodgy for two people to buy beer from the gas station alone. What the fuck? The vocal PA was a bit fucked, so the vocals didn't sound too good during all the bands sets. This was definitely the most punk looking / crusty type house we had been to, and it was very cold. Biff (the gig organisers) and the rest of the house were very accommodating, and they had cooked a lovely vegetable pie that we devoured after the show. After only four beers I was feeling pretty tired, and I passed out on the chair whilst we were all watching Robocop. I had a really good nights sleep, because despite it being so cold, I slept in my clothes in my sleeping bag, and I felt like a hibernating animal. Some of the others went to a party down the street that apparently was pretty lame.

In the morning we went to a local cafe named AMY'S PLACE that served breakfast for 99 cents before 9am. What a total bargain and it didn't taste shitty. Afterwards, some of us went along for a ride to get the oil changed in the van. Then we went to the THRIFT

STORE (which is like a large charity shop) and I bought a Buffalo Bills hoodie, which are the American Football team I supported as a kid. We loaded the van, ate some pizza, and set off for ROCHESTER in the early afternoon, with growing speculation as to what Clint got up to with a girl at the party.

27/10/06

Its 11am, and we are about to leave BOSTON. I am drunk & hungover like hell! I think Mother Nature is laughing at us because the weather is nice, and the heat isn't helping the recovery process. I wasn't that wasted in the bar last night, until Vellu, Al and I decided to order some Wild Turkey whiskey. We all downed the large shots, and I felt like being violently sick on the bar. The local barman looked too mean, so I did my best to keep it in. Not long after that is when I started getting in a fighting mood. I remember scoping this jerk out, and thinking about how I wanted to smash his face in. He was a typical bar resident. He looked like he was in his mid 30's, and he had a badly kept beard. He's the kind of guy that leeches on women, and plays the 'wacky local' card. He was getting on my nerves. Suddenly my wise head took over, and I remembered that it isn't a good idea to start fights on foreign soil. At this point I left the bar, and I decided to take my anger out elsewhere. I started stealing American flags from people's porches, and then trying to set them on fire. Unfortunately they were made from fire resistant material, and the fire couldn't get going. I guess the Americans are used to having their flags burned. It was a fun at the bar because there were so many of us there.

Back to where I left off last time, travelling to Rochester. We had to pull over on the hard shoulder, and watch Lasse stumble out of the van whilst throwing up. He was in a bad state. Upon arrival, it was a large warm house with lots of space, and the kids who were living there had recently moved in. We arrived early, so we hung about and then went to get some food. This was a show that was organised with 48 hours notice, so there weren't many people there. The show was OK, and finished early.

Afterwards Hero Dishonest & Acts of Sedition had a practice for their BLACK FLAG covers band that they are going to play on Halloween. I had been in a bit of a shit mood the last couple of days, so I decided to take a 'long' hot shower to ease my anxiety. Suddenly I felt a whole lot better. I drank a few beers before hitting the sack.

Rochester to Boston was another mammoth 9 hour drive. Thankfully I was in the van, so I managed to sleep for part of the journey. One of the traditions of the van is that every time it drives away from a toll both, everyone has to shout 'body massage' at the attendant. Typical tour humour that is funny, even though it shouldn't be. Thankfully I had Milan Kundera's 'Laughable Loves' to read, which made the ride a lot easier. I tried a taco from Taco Bell at a service station, it was fucking lame! No spice, and tasted like plastic. As soon as we arrived in Boston we went to get some food, burritos to be precise. Now this was from a proper Mexican cafe, and was so much nicer. Everyone met up at REGENERATION RECORDS, and then we headed to the basement for the show. Most of the gigs so far had been standard affairs. This gig however, surpassed them all. It was a large basement and it was crammed full of people. I got my second point in the Maximum Rock n Roll columnist spotting game, as Al Quint was in the crowd. The two local support bands were SGT. SLAUGHTER and POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, who were both ace. The crowd was going berserk during Hero Dishonest's set. The PA got knocked over twice during the second song, so they kept having to restart it. The pit was crazy throughout, and the Boston kids were lapping it up. The only big disappointment is that OUT COLD weren't able to play. Their drummer, John, who runs the label ACME RECORDS that is releasing the new album in the USA, came to the show. It was good to see him again and catch up. I think that the Boston in England and the Boston in USA are very similar in the ways. Loud, obnoxious, and love to go wild in the pit. Best show of the tour so far. THIS IS BOSTON (YES BOSTON!)

29/10/06

It took a lot of time to get our shit together in the morning. The hangovers were in full effect. The drive from Boston to PHILADELPHIA took about 6 hours. We had to pull over at a toll booth, so that Al could be sick. The drive into Philly is over a long bridge, and it gives a beautiful view of the city. Philly is well known as the home of Extreme Championship Wrestling and Rocky Balboa. There is even a statue of the latter. The gig was in a house called THE VEGGIEPLEX. It was Friday night, and it turned out that no drinking was allowed in or around the house. This sucked! I went to the cafe come liquor store around the corner, and got a fish hoagie and a bottle of Guinness. As I was waiting, a gangster with big clothes came inside and started hassling me for change. I told him that I couldn't spare anything, yet he still kept asking. Eventually he left and was waiting around outside. As I was eating my sandwich, a couple walked in. The woman was openly complaining that she didn't want to look at me eating because she couldn't afford any food. She continued to add that 'he better guard that hoagie with his life because I am going to go steal it'. I ignored her and looked out the window to see the gangster throwing fists around in the air. I was in a bad situation, and I had the fear. I picked up the rest of my sandwich and ran all the way back to the house. One of the local support bands was a crusty band, and the singer said the strangest thing I have heard from a crusty; 'Looking at the state of things at the moment, the only thing to do is vote democrat'. I thought that it was a valid point; however it is not something I expected to hear from a crusty. On the whole, this show sucked! It was a small turn out, and the no drinking policy made for a far too sober atmosphere. After the show we went back to the promoters (Dave) house and drank some Vodka. Jussi, Clint and I went to an Ethiopian bar around the corner with two girls who lived at the house, and it sold a beer and a shot for 3 dollars. The rest of the others came along later on. The bar closed at 2am, and we were supposed to go to a 'normal' party that apparently had 4000 flyers distributed for. Unfortunately it had been closed down already. So we sat on the

porch and drank more whilst playing a truth revealing drinking game called 'I have never'. Good fun!

We left Philadelphia early in the morning due to anticipated traffic problems in NEW YORK. I got my first glimpse of the 'big apple' when we approached the Lincoln tunnel. It looked beautiful. After negotiating the 'horn-honking' traffic we arrived in Manhattan at the venue, ABC NO RIO, on time. The gig space was a good size, and it was an afternoon show. There were about 30 people in attendance. The first band to play was called RAT BYTE from Connecticut. They played good fast hardcore. The guitarist was very friendly, and he even sold me three 7"s and a t-shirt for 5 dollars. The gig was pretty fun, and finished around 6pm. After the show we went to a local curry cafe for food, and then we drove to BROOKLYN for a party. It was large house that was neighboured by another punk house. The first thing that I did was go along to the liquor store with Lasse. I bought a bottle of wine, a bottle of Jagermeister, and a 6 pack of beer. We all started to get loaded immediately. This was a covers band party. The first to play were THE WIPERS, and then it was Hero Dishonest & Acts of Sedition as 'I can't believe it's not BLACK FLAG'. People were going wild in the mosh pit, and there was plenty of sing-a-longs. All the band members kept changing round, and I even got up and sang 'White Minority'. Vellu threw his bass onto the drums and then dived onto them at the end of the set. Vellu was drunk as hell, and he entertained us all by beating up Jussi with a coat-hanger, and then throwing a chair off the balcony. We had to covertly pick up the chair remains and hide them down the street so that the house owners wouldn't be pissed off at us. MINOR THREAT and NIRVANA also played, and they were both good fun shows. This party was fancy dress, and I went as the internet dude who has EARTH CRISIS tattooed on his face. We were getting excited about RANCID playing next, but for some reason a girl who lived at the house cancelled the party and everyone was thrown out of the house. The Rancid guys kicked over the drums and stormed out, and the drunken Finns and I were getting angry at the girl for

stopping the party. It turns out that the party was stopped because the dude dressed as Santa was stealing beer from the fridge and then giving it away to other people; and some dude fell down the outside stairs and his wrist landed on top of his beer bottle. Needless to say that there was blood everywhere. As the party was pretty much dead, Lasse and I migrated to the next house along with a bottle of Vodka. We hung around with the Rancid guys, and went to a room upstairs. For some reason, I started to pretend that I was Polish, and Lasse followed suite. We started making funny comments, which were peppered up with the odd use of German. Everyone in the room was laughing for ages, and for at least an hour they genuinely thought were Polish. That was until they started asking what certain words meant in Polish, and Lasse poorly replied "Wshtyzzzystz" and "tszywwwghgh". The whole situation was Borat-esque hilarity. After that we sat around downstairs talking to various people, and polishing off the vodka. Drinking such hard liquor before sleeping is quite dangerous. Safe to say that after all the booze we consumed, we slept well that night. What a great party! Life really doesn't get much better!

31/10/2006

Hungover in NYC on Sunday morning. Vellu, Lasse and I skipped breakfast and took the subway downtown. Brooklyn was swarming with 'gangsters'. Our first stop was ground zero, and they were still clearing up rubble from the buildings. I posed as a plane and had a tourist picture taken. We then visited the Statue of Liberty, and then took the subway to Times Square. After eating some fresh pizza the INTERNATIONAL BOOTH INSPECTORS visited the adult preview booths on 8th avenue. They jumped in the first shop they saw and headed to the basement. What they didn't realise until they had put their cash in the slot, is that they were in the gay male & chicks with dicks section. One member only slipped in a dollar, so after seeing some strange things, he headed upstairs to the regular booths. The others had thrown in all their money, so had to persevere, and said they only found 2 straight channels

out of 140. Of all the places to end up it had to be the 'male only basement'. This provided them with much amusement on the subway, which they took to meet the others at ABC No Rio. For the 2 hours it took to drive out of New York, we reflected on how our time there had been the best so far on tour.

3 hours further south and we arrived in BETHLEHEM, Pennsylvania. The gig was in a lovely venue called THE GLOBE CAFE. The owner and his wife had lived in Britain for a number of years, and they told us that it was where they got the idea for The Globe. A place for live music and a safe place for young people to hang out. We got fed spaghetti Bolognese at the 'bar' and there was even Birch Beer (a milder form of root beer) on tap! The local bands were average. At one point I was outside having a cigarette and I started talking to a woman with a greyhound, using my Borat-esque disguise as POLISH LUCAS. When she told me that her dog was an ex-racer rescue dog, the words "In Poland, no rescue, we use dog for food" came into my head. She believed every word I said. On tour it is a good opportunity to brush up the acting skills. During the set of Hero Dishonest, the kids were going wild and having fun in the pit. The PA speakers got knocked over twice. Word had got round about the Black Flag covers, and after Acts of Sedition played there was the 'I can't believe it's not Black Flag' covers set. We drove to ALLENTOWN after the gig, and stayed at a house where Dave from R.A.M.B.O. lived. Much to our disappointment he announced that he was quitting the band, that they are going to split up, and are playing their last ever show in January. People from the house had skipped loads of vegan burritos, sandwiches, and salads. We ate well whilst we were there.

The next day we headed to DOUBLE DECKER records, which turned out to be the best record store so far. Safe to say that Mikko was very happy. I managed to find copies of Bad Religion - The Peel Sessions Promo on red wax, Dead Silence - How the hell could we make more money than this?, a Totuus 7" on splattered wax, and Anti-Seens tribute to Terry Funk record. Collectively we spent a

lot of money at that store. It was our day off, so we headed to WASHINGTON, DC, for the DAS OATH show. Whilst in the city, we went to visit the White House, and do the tourist thing. After that, Vellu, Lasse and I went to Chinatown and ate some fresh noodles. On the way back to the show, I overheard some jocks say, "Look at those German Rockers". Did we look that bad? The show was in a bar called THE WAREHOUSE. There was a band playing called AMPERE, however they didn't look or sound like the Ampere who played recently in Europe with Sinaloa. Das Oath weren't particularly good. What was more entertaining was watching the people dancing. Some dude even got thrown out for dancing too macho. After the show we stayed at some 'no drugs, no alcohol' house, so Lasse and I sat outside and the steps for a while, drinking beer. It was a long, strange day off.

In the morning, Tiia made a big vegetable pasta dish for us, so that we got a good feed before the long drive to ASHVILLE, North Carolina. It took us a grand total of 9 hours, and we somehow managed to get to the venue on time. It was Halloween, which is a big celebration here. The gig was on the ground floor of a house, and the majority of people were in costume. We got fed pizza and tofu, from Jason, the drummer from Kakistocracy. I also got to hang out with JD & Matt from the band, who stayed with us in Leeds over the summer. The first part of the show was cover bands, where we saw BLONDIE, and SCREECHING WEASEL. There were also bands doing general soul songs, and 80's hair metal. The beer was making me sleepy, so I went and bought some SPARKS. This drink is a combination of energy drink & malt liquor! It tasted OK, and kept me awake late. However, next days hangover was almost unbearable. The first proper band to play was the FUTURE VIRGINS. They were great, combining elements of Dillinger Four & Against Me. There was a huge turnout for the show, and the kids danced for every band. Hero Dishonest concluded proceedings, and after their well received set, put an end to the Black Flag covers, by playing the last ever cover of the tour. After the show, we went to

an after-party. Unfortunately it was full of the worse elements: a stoned band sat on the couch together, smelly hippies, crimethinc kids, and a drunken hag trying it on with everyone. Needless to say that we mainly just sat on the porch drinking beer, as per usual.

I arose at mid-day, and Jason had kindly laid on a breakfast spread for us. He was also kind enough to change the oil on the car for us. In the afternoon we went into the town centre, and checked out record, book & food stores. The usual shit! It turns out that Ashville is similar to Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire. All the hippies move there when they settle down and lead a liberal lifestyle! My suspicions were confirmed when I saw a GRATEFUL DEAD board game in the bookstore. It took about 4 hours to get to ATHENS, Georgia. This is notorious for being the home of REM and FRED SCHNEIDER, who once tried out for the doors after Jim Morrison died, and went on to form the hugely successful B-52s. Again, we got cooked lovely food, by the promoters Jason & James. The gig was at their house in their living room! They even had a leftover keg from Halloween that we got to drink out of for the night. There was a local band that played called BIRDFLU, I can't remember if they were any good or not. Again the 30 or so people in attendance were going wild whilst Hero Dishonest played. It's quite a spectacle to see a circle pit in a living room! After the show I took a short nap, and joined the others later to watch a rather disturbing film called FUN WITH DOLLS, about some guy who mimics words from the dolls mouths, plays games with and loses to them, and as a forefit they shit on him. This was followed by a horror movie, before going to sleep.

08/11/2006

In the morning some of us went to Target to buy some cheap I Pods, followed by pizza and coffee in the city centre. The drive to CHATANUGA, Tennessee, took about 4 hours. The gig was in somebody's living room, and it was a party, FUTURE VIRGINS played again. I was in a bad state, the kind on tour where you are tired & been partying for so long that

you have to relax and not talk to people. I ran the distro most of the night, and drank 2 beers whilst reading Ernest Hemmingway. It was my first time reading his work, what a good writer! The show was pretty wild, plenty of moshing. The 'headlining' band was some crust/grindcore hilarity called ACCUSER. Our old friend Andrea, from Memphis, turned up to the fast show, which was nice. After the show finished we left to embark on a 16 hour drive to HOUSTON, Texas.

We left at 3am, and arrived at 6pm the same day. It was an epic drive. I got 2 hours sleep and we stopped off at the Waffle House for breakfast around 10am. It was the first time I felt like being back in Europe. The venue was a big and dark warehouse space, and was run by hippies with long greasy hair. We were a little early so we headed to the Mexican restaurant for food. It was just the 2 bands playing, and there was a decent turnout. Plenty of kids, doing circle pits and the like. When Hero Dishonest mentioned they were playing Austin the next day, a huge 'Austin sucks' chant echoed around the room. This was the most heckled show so far. After the show we stayed in a house nearby, 8 of us crammed into a 1 bedroom apartment. It was good to get some sleep that night, after such a long drive.

10/11/2006

The next day we headed to AUSTIN, which was a short 3 hour drive. It was great to finally get some nice weather. It was 20 plus degrees and it was baking hot. Upon arrival we headed to the house of Logan (Army of Jesus) & Timmy, and they had prepared us some food. The first of tonight's shows was at a downtown club called EMOS. We all got free drink tickets to get wasted with. Acts of Sedition & Hero Dishonest played first and second, yet with it being in a big rock club, it sounded bad. Hardcore, thrash and crust don't go down well in large venues, and the majority of the crowd seemed disinterested, aside from the friends of the bands. They were followed by a couple of bad metal bands. We kept ourselves amused by the singer's comments between songs. One noteworthy comment was 'Has anyone heard

of Killamortis in Austin?' (Complete Silence) 'Didn't think so'. The headlining band was THE ACCUSED, who apparently is a really famous original thrash metal band. They were OK, and reminded me more of a stripped down version of Iron Maiden. I guess the promoter was expecting a lot more people. Most of the night we were drinking out back. After the show we witnessed what the main bar street in Austin had to offer. This town has 70,000 students, so you can only begin to imagine the insanity. On the way back to the van we walked past a car which was running with the keys in the ignition, and nobody to be seen. Apparently it had been there for an hour. We thought about stealing it for 2 minutes, and then we gave up on the drunken idea. We then drove to a punk house that was situated right in the middle of the frat (student) district. I got out the van and started walking around in a party house. There were about 200 people there, and they were playing RNB and drinking brandy. I then realised that I had walked into the wrong house. The house show was with TOTAL ABUSE from Austin, who are an awesome thrash band. The room was packed for all the bands, and people were trying to get a view from outside the door in the garden. Most people got wasted on this night, and the district & parties were swarming with people. A bizarre experience in all. A ROCK SHOW and a FRAT PARTY on the same night certainly went against the grain of what the tour had been like so far. We got back to the house about 4am for some much deserved sleep.

In the morning we slowly got our heads together and headed to an all you can eat restaurant called Java Noodles. Needless to say, we stuffed our faces full, the American way! Tiia had come down with a cold and had a really bad cough, so she stayed in Austin and the rest of us headed 2 hours south to SAN ANTONIO. I invented a new drink that night called ROOTMEISTER, which is a combination for Jagermeister and Root Beer. The show was at another house, however this time it was outside in the driveway! There were no other bands that night, and again, the kids went crazy for the bands. We spoke to a lot of people after the show; they were friendly and interested in

us. We sold the most merchandise that night, than any other night so far. We touched upon the idea of staying around to party, however, in the end we decided to drive back to Austin and get drunk in the van. We initially thought that it was legal in Texas to drink alcohol in a vehicle; we only found out afterwards that it was illegal. Oh well. After finishing the Jagermeister, I started to drink the Mad Dog wine that Lasse had bought. Will from Acts of Sedition commented to Lasse, 'You bought a bottle of Mad Dog 20/20 at a gas station? That's the most white trash thing anyone could do!' When we got back, Lasse and I sat on the porch for hours, drinking wine and smoking cigarettes. This was the time when I felt most like a 'white-trash hobo redneck'.

The next morning I had the worst hangover I have had for a long time. It was so bad that I had to go and be sick in the toilet. We all left the house and went to the coffee shop where Logan worked. It was one of those hangovers where at one point I would feel fine, and then suddenly start to feel ill & sick, and it kept going back and forth. I somehow managed to keep down an egg breakfast, and that made me feel a whole lot better. After saying our goodbyes we took a 3 hour drive north to DENTON. The show was at JJ'S PIZZA HOUSE, and we got free pizza and beer, bonus! It was a Monday night, so the gig was pretty quiet. There was a great 'stadium crust' band that played called UNIT 21, who reminded me of Section 28 from Japan. It was a pretty uneventful night on the whole, and as soon as the gig had finished we went to stay at some nearby house.

The highlight of the next day was going to the cinema to see the BORAT movie. We were all having fits of laughter throughout. There are so many good one-liners in the film. Sacha Baron Cohen is a genius. Afterwards, Tiia cooked food for us back at the house, and then we made the short 1 hour drive to FORT WORTH, DALLAS. Unfortunately the promoter was a 17 year old kid, who didn't have a clue what he was doing. There were no flyers put out for the show, he didn't give us any food (which he promised), and he didn't even do a collection for the bands. No wonder people were starting

to get bummed out by this point of the tour. Thankfully there was a great guy who worked at the venue (1919) who collected money for us, and then tried his best to get us some free pizza. Unfortunately his efforts were in vain, so he gave us directions to a cheap Mexican take away, where we ate after the show. The venue was a typical social centre, and to make matters worse there was no drinking allowed. And there are still people being killed everyday in this world! I couldn't be arsed checking out the support bands, who were mainly 17 year old boys whose hobbies included substance abuse and not having a job. I just got wired on coffee. We drove back to Austin that night. I suppose that there was going to be one show in the tour that sucked, and this was it.

I went out early for breakfast, and then we set off for LAWRENCE, Kansas. The drive took about 8 hours. It was a grueling day because it was so hot, and I couldn't catch up on my sleep at all. It was nice to watch all the wastelands disappear from the back of the van whilst listening to music. The sunsets here in America are so beautiful. This is because the country is so flat, and the view is so vast. To give it an extra edge of beauty, the pollution from the cities makes the sunset into many varying colours. The show was in one of the dirtiest punk houses I have ever seen (with the exception of Polish squats). With that in mind, we started to get drunk immediately. We were cooked some nice vegan food, and then I took a power nap in the van. The first local band to play, NOTHING ELSE, was awful. The second local band, MONSTERS IN THE BASEMENT was marginally better. There were lots of drunken kids in the basement, who were dancing around to all the bands. At one point a one legged man on crutches came down the stairs, and in true comical timing, people came spilling out of the pit and skittled him over. To be fair, the guy took it well, and laughed it off. There were plenty of fuck ups at this show. There was one traveller kid (wearing a Bam Margera hat!) who appeared to know nobody, who was scrounging beer and money off people. There was the couch surfer girl who kept telling us about her love for bikes. The most annoying person at the show award goes

to this annoying, self-righteous, anarchist girl. She kept wittering on during political debates, and when we were making arguments she would but in and raise her whiny voice even more. What a total fucking prick! A load of us stayed up late drinking on the porch. I recall one time when my friend Luke and I were discussing 'The real things you need to do before you are 30', and one of them was to run away from a taxi without paying, and that night we did. On this night in Lawrence, I decided to do another of these things, which is to get in a car with a drunk driver. For a laugh I went on a drunken driving escapade around the streets. They didn't drive too fast, and I felt that my life wasn't in any risk. They were driving up and over kerbs and onto people's lawns, it was hilarious. I don't condone drink driving and it's not big or clever, however for that one night only it was funny. A line from the new Hero Dishonest record sums up this night: "A country where biking is considered revolutionary and my mums a terrorist".

24/11/2006

In the morning, Clint, Mikko, Lasse and I went for a drive to get food. We couldn't find anything for a while, so we pulled into a health food supermarket. Clint and I were too hungover, so we decided to hang on until we could eat something greasy. Eventually we made our way to The International House of Pancakes. I tried eggs benedict for the first time, and it was gorgeous! One of the best things about America is all the nice, cheap, and large portions of food you get. As well as free refills on your drinks! No wonder people are so fat! We hung out at the house for a while, whilst others went record shopping. I had spent too much by this point, so record shops were out of the equation.

Early afternoon, Clint and I went with Nick and others from the house to a local brewery where they work. We sat down, ate food and drank real ale. Luxury! The people from the house even bought us our food because they got massive discounts. Bonus! The brewery was equivalent to Sam Smiths in Tadcaster, yet on a smaller scale. We left Lawrence around 5pm,

and took a short 2 hour drive to COLOMBIA, Missouri. The gig was an opening night party for the NO COAST INFO SHOP. Unfortunately it was no drinking inside. I drank a couple of cans outside and watched the cops come and hassle people to not congregate on the road. I watched a great fucked up band called GORCH FOCK. After that, the beer was making me tired, I couldn't get in the mood, and missed sleep was catching up on me. So, I went to the van, and hung out with some of the others, and whilst all the bands played I slept. It was clearly becoming more and more difficult to socialize with strangers by this point. Other bands that played that night were MONSTERS IN THE BASSMENT, LOS LOCOMOTIVES, SNAKE TRAP, and THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB. I recall a funny story of a kid who went to see This Bike is a Pipe Bomb, bought a sticker and put it on his bike. One day when he was at university, a security guard saw his bike locked up and called the police, causing the university building to be closed down for the rest of the day. After the gig we stayed at THE DIVA HOUSE, which was an all female punk house. We did the usual of sitting on the porch. I was still tired so I went to bed fairly early. The people who lived at the house were all nice and looked after us well.

We hung out at the house the next day. Everybody was being quiet, due to tiredness and a realisation that the tour was nearly over. The next gig was 3 hours away in ST LOUIS. When driving around this place (it was a Friday night) we realised that it was a ghost town. It seems that everyone is moving away from this place. House prices had dropped, and the punk house where we ate was bought by the punks for \$20,000, and it was huge! The gig was in a large garage at the back of their house, called THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE. The local bands that played were THE BEATING and SAYONORA. A fair few people turned up, including Andrea, and there was lots of dancing for the touring bands. I had to drink alcopops that night because beer wasn't doing anything anymore. We were hoping for a party, but people filtered out as soon as the gig finished. There was nothing happening at the house, so we went back to stay at Scotts house. He was

a young Greg Graffin look-a-like. We partied a little, until his room mate woke up, so out of respect we calmed down and eventually went to sleep.

Scott had to work early, so we had to leave at 9am. Naturally everyone slept until 8:50, and got ready in 10 minutes. This morning we realised that we were back in the north because it was freezing weather. We went to a local grease café, and all sat at the counter and ate cheap breakfast. The waitress was really rude, and didn't deserve the generous tip we left. There was an old school jukebox there that played 7 songs for a dollar, so we listened to a lot of Johnny Cash and ZZ Top. Leaving early turned out to be a blessing in disguise because there was heavy traffic on the roads. It took us 6 hours to drive to CHICAGO and we arrived on time. We swiftly ate some food at the Fourth Rotor house before setting off to the gig a few blocks away. The gig was organised by Jake, formerly of Fourth Rotor. The first band was a local crust act. They were followed by a sloppy Latino punk band with a massive singer. Doug hooked up the sound that night, and Hero Dishonest sounded spot on. Al from Acts of Sedition and I tore it up in the pit, and it was a wild basement show. The headlining band was an all girl feminist punk band. They were great, and the crowd was going nuts. There was an Andre the Giant look-a-like who was a bit of a simpleton and he kept tearing part of the roof off during the set. I originally had a ticket to go see RANCID in Leeds that night, and I can honestly say that I preferred to be at this basement show watching unknown bands tearing it up. I like being able to stand right next to the band, and feeling each others breath and sweat. I like this little secret we have. After the show I was drunk and talking with a Polish guy who had moved to USA, about Soviet era Poland. His father (a lecturer) was kicked out of the country with 1000 other people, for having different views on things. What a waste of talent for the Polish nation.

After the gig we went back to the house for an after party, and more importantly a Hero Dishonest / Acts of Sedition end of tour party. 20

A few locals came back with us. There was a plethora of alcohol and drugs floating round. A few people were high on magic mushrooms, and it was fun to watch them freak out at times. I made the mistake of drinking beer after I had been drinking wine at the party. It leveled me out too much, and by 4am I couldn't take anymore so I crashed out. It seemed like everyone had fun, and we were all sad that it came to an end so quickly. It felt like we had only left Chicago about a week ago.

The next day we got up early, had breakfast and set off on the long drive to MINNEAPOLIS. It took about 7 hours, and it was snowing. The gig was in a warehouse space, and we had to load the gear in a lift at the rear, and then go up to the 3rd floor. There were many band practice rooms, and a large room where the gig was. Thankfully it was heated, so no need to wrap up warm. Three local bands played, who were all decent. I had to scrounge beer off people because the state laws meant that you couldn't buy alcohol on Sunday nights. How stupid! I talked to some local people throughout the gig, and enjoyed watching Hero Dishonest and Acts of Sedition for the last time on the tour. After the gig we went for final drinks at a local bar. Captain Jack Whiskey and Coke for \$2, result! We met Jason Webb, who was a local independent film producer who had made a film called 'Golden Showers' about people who go and urinate on other people in public. He had just got a \$10,000 dollar grant to produce another film. He was dressed in crazy attire, and he was telling us about his tongue in cheek rock band called FAGGOT. What a dude! We stayed at the promoters flat, and we all slept in the front room like Sardines. In the morning we said goodbye to the Acts of Sedition guys, and left at 6am for Chicago airport to drop Mikko off. This was officially the end of the tour.

CONCLUSION

It was certainly a whirlwind tour of the USA, being in a different city everyday. I was pleased to get to see some tourist stuff, like walking around New York and seeing the White House. We got to see many good bands, drink lots of

alcohol that didn't cost an arm or a leg, eat lots of nice food, and hang out with all the good people. Thankfully we didn't bump into too many jocks or rednecks. It was certainly worth quitting my job in order to go on this tour, and I look forward to touring with Hero Dishonest again, and re-visiting the USA. All ages basement shows with alcohol only tolerance is the way forward!

Instead of naming everyone individually I would like to say thanks to all the people that organised, flyer'd and worked at the gigs, all the bands that played, all the people that gave us somewhere to sleep, all the people that cooked us food, and all the people that bought us beer. We salute you! Feel free to visit me in the UK.

2006 IN REVIEW

A live music article for a change

[This was originally supposed to appear in Last Hours fanzine, as one of my regular columns. That was until they ignored my emails and decided not to tell me that they were not using my work anymore]

Why do people care about recordings? They are just there to drown out the sound of sex from your housemates, or to listen to on the bus when you are in an unsociable mood. It's the live gig (or show) where punk-rock is alive and in its element. Here is a review of the year 2006 for good, bad, and bizarre punk-rock gigs.

THE HORROR at the AGAINST THE GRAIN FESTIVAL in Bradford proved to be one of the most entertaining sets of the year, which pitted Andy Bryant's witticism against the slagging of a hundred or so drunken crusties. To make it more of a spectacle, passed out bodies were sprawled on the stage as they played. Not your average 1 in 12 Club gig, but not far off. The whole festival was a huge success, as we collectively raised €2000 for the ZORO Squat Collective in Leipzig, Germany, for them to put towards buying the building off the state.

The entertainment value of The Horror was only matched by OI POLLOI when they played at the K-TOWN FESTIVAL in Copenhagen, Denmark. The singer, Deek, was humouring the crowd between every song, and at one point, in true socialist fashion, passed a bottle of whiskey out to the 200+ crowd to drink. The highlight of the set was an American flag being burnt on stage whilst they played the song 'Americans Out'. K-Town was definitely the festival highlight of the year. There were so many good bands, which included; Nightmare (Japan), Pisschrist (Australia), Kyklopien Sukupuuto (Finland), and Ruidosa Inmundicia (Austria) who unfortunately had to cancel their UK tour planned in late 2007. There were other events going on such as films, political discussions, protests and the legendary bike wars, which is a human version of Robot Wars, but with people on modified bicycles. The organisers had prepared it so well that they had booked out a huge sports hall for all the people attending the festival to sleep in.

It is always fun going to see MUNICIPAL WASTE live. Earlier in the year they played at Josephs Well in Leeds. The pit was mental, and there were plenty of people doing speaker dives throughout their set. The singer was also getting people to use his body board to literally, crowd 'surf'. The band came back later in the year, and we made an August bank holiday trip to Manchester to go see them. This time it wasn't as wild, which meant we there was more fun to be had in the pit by messing around with beach balls. For some reason they played before PAINT IT BLACK, who were really boring. I think NONE MORE BLACK is a far more entertaining live band due to the simple fact that they have melody.

A strange venue I came across was THE BOATCLUB in Cork, Ireland, when I was on the THREADS tour. It was on a jetty in the middle of a river, and we had to park on the main road whilst we unloaded the van. Threads are turning out to be the DIY rock n roll sensations of the north with their ass-shaking grooves. The hot new Irish bands at the moment are THE FREEBOOTERS (Tongue in cheek Oi!) and 21 TUNGUSKA (Heavy crust, featuring members

of Easpa Measa & Silence). However, the most different & interesting gig venue I went this year to was in the changing rooms of a disused mine, named Dul Michal, in OSTRAVA, Czech Republic. It is now a museum, which we got to go on a tour of the next day, and the old miners clothes were still hanging above the bands as they played. The place was full of drunken teenagers, and the gig got stopped earlier than expected because someone had called the police.

That gig was part of a European tour that I did with VALHALA PACFISTS and KNEEL BUCHANAN. The gigs varied from being with two punks in a cold German squat in HALLE on a Monday night to two hundred punks on Easter Sunday in the small village of CERNOTIN, Czech Republic. The highlight for MC POSITIVE BASTARD was playing at a youth centre in Dorfen, Germany. I was sleeping during the local bands because I was so tired, and was considering sacking off the gig. I got a second wind, drank 2 beers, and went on stage. The words flowed that night, and lots of people were getting down to my songs. I even got picked up and crowd surfed over people. I went down so well that they cheered me on for an encore after Valhalla Pacifists had played, and I sang a House of Pain (!) cover, and everyone went mad for it. I was so psyched after the gig that I persuaded the soundman to let me DJ. So we had an impromptu punk disco for the next couple of hours. People were dancing for a good mix of punk-rock and cheesy pop music. Its nights like this that make me realise why DIY punk-rock is worth it.

Two of the bands that I saw on the tour who impressed me most are STRONG AS TEN from France, and SHEEVA YOGA from Czech Republic. Strong as ten have the whole 80's US hardcore thing going on, they are fast, tight and energetic on stage. Sheeva Yoga is a three piece who play Spazz worship fastcore, which is no bad thing. Another band I got to see on that tour, AMANDA WOODWARD, I was also lucky enough to see when they toured the UK. They have been going for 6 years, and have the whole screamo/emo sound down to a tee. They are fast & chaotic at times, slow & 22

emotional at others, and wonderful people to boot. They told me that on a tour earlier in the year, they played MOSCOW, were paid \$1000 (in US dollars) and had to spend half of that bribing different sets of police on their drive out of Russia.

One of the most hyped bands to come to the UK this year was SKITSYSTEM from Sweden. They are held in high regard in the crust/d-beat scene. I put them on in Leeds & Bradford and they were dull and boring live, and not worth their guarantee. At least it got some people out of the woodwork, who probably saw some far better support bands, such as FLYBLOWN, and BURNING THE PROSPECT.

Overall I would have to say that the VICTIMS all-day gig at The Common Place in Leeds was my favourite for the year. All the bands were great, especially RUIN, who ended up playing at the last minute. When Victims started to play, the room erupted. All the bands got paid exceptionally well, The Common Place took over £1000 at the bar, and I was left with £50 in my pocket for all the hard work I put in organising the gig. For once, everything ran smoothly.

One of my favourite bands that toured the UK in 2006 was DEAN DIRG from Germany; who play proper rock n roll hardcore. They played at a 1 in 12 Club all dayer, with three other touring bands and blew them all off the stage. GOOD CLEAN FUN came back to England, along with their £250 guarantee. They came across as total self-righteous wankers when they played in Harrogate, in 2005. I worked in the café when they played at the 1 in 12 club this year, and they were being really arsey about the food the promoter had prepared. This time, they had a whole new set of members beside the singer. Despite their attitude, as a live music band they are great. The singer was a lot less preachy, and the highlight of their 'greatest hits' set was the banter between the singer and the crowd.

One of the most difficult gig clashes this year was between seeing COCKSPARRER for free at WASTED FESTIVAL or going to see

LEATHERFACE. I chose the Leatherface gig in Leeds and it turned out to be one of the highlights of the year. Dickie Hammond and Frankie Stubbs re-united to play a one off show with the original line up. It was louder than war, and they played about 5 songs from the Mush album. What a treat it was, I was completely blown away!

On a sadder note, MAKE IT COUNT promotions from Leeds, called it a day as Ian left to go live in Reading. Whilst at times they put on some average generic hardcore bands, they put on some crackers, like ANNIHILATION TIME (USA) and CIVIL TERROR (Netherlands).

One of the most bizarre sets I saw was ARMY OF FLYING ROBOTS playing under a massive projector screen that was showing the scenes in the original movie of Godzilla, where the monster is destroying the city. It was almost like they were made for each other. I managed to cycle up to another gig that night and catch most of the set from KYLESA (USA). They are another band that uses a good combination of punk and rock n roll. They even had 2 drummers who both played in sync!

On a final note, after all these years, I managed to get a band together called WASTE OF RATIONS. We were practicing at the Hanover Square squat in Leeds until it closed down. As a thank you we played our 5 songs at their eviction party. A week later saw the final gig at the squat, where the excellent hardcore band from Germany, FAMILY MAN, played. [Shortly after this article was written WASTE OF RATIONS became consigned to the punk scrapheap]

And to finish things on a lighter note, here is a funny story: CRASH THE POSE (RIP), from Guilford, toured England for 9 days during the summer. Whilst on tour the singer entered a competition on Radio 1 and won tickets to go to the Warped Tour in the USA. He left for the States a few days later, and the band had to finish the tour without a singer.

FOOTBALL STORIES

There's only three teams in Yorkshire! - Farsley Celtic, English Non-League Premier Division

An article based on a trip to watch a small local non-league football team (Farsley Celtic), compared with the experience of going to watch a large league football team (Leeds United) relating the experience to aged old battles between British Royalists and Rebellious Settlers.

Ticket prices that cost nearly a days wages, upper class families that don't tolerate swearing, and it's all controlled by one of the unelected rulers of the world! This is the current state of affairs in the top flights of football. Today we will vote with our feet, and march to a football game that means something more than just money.

The rights for TV coverage have even affected the (Blue Square) Conference. The game is Farsley Celtic vs. York City, and it has been moved to a cold Sunday, 7:15pm kick off. This is so it will fit into the Setanta Sports TV schedule. It is a blasphemous time for a football game, even in today's era of regular Sunday matches. Yet for Farsley Celtic (who are in their highest league position since the founding of the club), the extra few thousand pounds it brings in, is a big deal.

During my youth, my father took me to Elland Road for several seasons to see Leeds United. We used to park the car at the top of Beeston Hill, and embark on a 20 minute downhill walk to the ground. Life back then was a stroll in the park for a successful club, little financial worries, and a cities worth of dedicated supporters turning up week in week out.

We arrived in the district surrounding Farsley's ground, which is a typical northern middle class suburb, full of streets containing new, wide, and bright semi-detached houses, contrasted by alleys of re-developed, old, tall, and dirty terraced houses that provide a stark reminder

of the poverty that the Yorkshire folk once suffered at the hands of the Royalists.

After a 5 minute walk from the car, Throstle Nest appeared on the immediate horizon. Traditional towered floodlights stoop from each corner of the ground, beaming gloriously into the stadium, lighting up a somewhat grim winter night. It provides the perfect battle ground to settle another battle in the long war between the Celtic Settlers and the Imperialist Minster Men of Royal York.

The opening strike goes to the Celts, as we notice a half mile queue of York supporters standing in the cold waiting to get into the stadium. We walk straight to the home turnstile, without an Old Age Pensioner digging into their pockets for change and holding up the queue, in sight. This victory is for all those who had to line up in soup kitchens for a bowl of gritted soup.

Elland Road has been part of the revolutionary movement in turnstile operation. It has adopted the policies of its founding father, The City of Manchester Stadium, and introduced automatic turnstiles. The mechanisation of society has become one step closer, as the turnstiles are now simply operated by a machine that reads the barcodes on a ticket or season ticket card, and then allows the customer to enter. This is yet another faceless transaction.

Back at Farsley, I entered the turnstile and looked inside the mesh covered hole in the wall. I saw an old gadgie perched on a high stool, perusing over a half finished crossword in the back of a tabloid, and a warming smell of stale rolling tobacco emanated from him. I passed through a five pound note and asked for a student ticket. He didn't care less whether I was a student or not - solidarity with the poor, this IS Yorkshire – and he handed me a small ticket that appeared from a small silver slit by the turnstile, as I passed into the ground.

Twenty minutes into the game and two of York's big guns have already made an impact and fired home two impressive individual goals. With more money behind them, it

seems inevitable that they are going to win the war. However, five minutes before half time, a superb run is capped off by a pin point 25 yard drive into the corner of the York goal, to make it 2-1. The scorer, an immigrant settler himself, perfectly embodies the history of Celts, and he sent a shiver down the spines of the Minster Men.

Returning to Elland Road, it is also five minutes before half time, and I was faced with the same old dilemma of half time refreshments. The first option is to go now; I will be right at the front of the queue, I will be guaranteed a chicken balti pie, and I can get a cold pint of cider to sup over the break; unfortunately I will have to annoy everyone by making them stand up as I walk across the row of seats. The second option is to wait till the half time whistle; where I will not have to bother anyone by walking past them; yet by the time I will have rushed to the kiosk, I will have to wait the length of half time only to get a cold hard burger and a cup of soup flavoured water.

The half-time whistle goes at Throstle Nest, and we leisurely stroll over to the Club bar. It is a proper drinking establishment, and not a soulless kiosk full of watered down commercial lager sold by immigrant workers who don't give a fuck and are only there to collect a wage. I was impressed that they sold one of the world best lagers, Budvar, and a bar lady with a smile poured me a round of three drinks that cost me less than six quid.

We stood and watched the non-league novelty of a big screen half-time TV analysis of the game, conducted by a third rate presenter working for minimum wage in hope of furthering his career, and a retired early through injury, ex-footballer, who once deflected the ball with his arse into his own goal during a world cup semi final game for England.

Throughout the second half of the game, we stood (yes stood) at the side of the pitch to get a better view of the game. From here we can somewhat make out the chants of both sets of fans. What I really noticed was how near the crowd are to the play of the game. I frequently

could hear banter being exchanged between opposing players and the referee. We were so close that you could see the cold breath coming from their mouths, and even read the numbers on the back of the players' shirts. Sitting in the middle of the North Stand at Elland Road, I would need a pair of binoculars to work out which player was who, especially as different players were joining and leaving the club every week.

The second half was being controlled by York City; they were getting enough players to the ball, which was something that Farsley could not achieve. It felt like the boring slog in a middle of battle. One side was clearly at an advantage, happy to bide by the rules of engagement, until the opportune moment was presented to kill off the opposition.

What made this period of the game entertaining was what was going on off the pitch. A handful of Farsley Celtic 'fans' had gathered behind the York goal, an area which was desolate during the first period. They all took their shirts off and started waving them over their heads whilst simultaneously chanting "Blue Army". This resembled Leeds United away fans of old who used to take off their shirts at half time and chant "Champions of Europe, We are the Champions, Champions of Europe" over and over again. Surely this was not a coincidence?

As time passed, a few more excitable youths joined in, and increased their size to about 50 people. They started to be more adventurous and began to chant different songs. Out of the blue, a group of them began to shout the vintage classic anthem of the region, "Yorkshire, Yorkshire". This was until some wise guy in the mob realised that York were actually from Yorkshire too! Thus, they reverted to a modified version of "West Yorkshire, West Yorkshire". This gave a true insight into the minds of some Yorkshire football fans.

Synonymous with any great football rivalry, the game was momentarily marred by some off the field trouble. Broken sections of an advertising board were being hurled onto the pitch from

outside the stadium. One of them hit the York goalkeeper on the back of the leg, and the game was stopped by the referee. A group of security guards ran over to where they were being thrown, but they were unable to get out of the ground. The referee cleared the debris from the pitch and then went to speak to the teams' managers. The trouble had ceased, and a couple of minutes later, two policemen plodded past us to investigate the situation. In a moment of comic ingenuity I shouted "Better late than never", something that surely would have got me kicked out of any major football stadium. As the crowd around us joined in on the laughter, the policeman (who surprisingly took it very well) laughed, waved and carried on with his duty.

York City managed to seize the day and carve open the Farsley defence, to slot home a further two goals late in the second half. The battle had been lost again by the Celts, as York finished up winning 4-1, yet their army of followers still gave their men an ovation as they left the field. The Royals had won the battle on the field, but off the field there was to be a new swing in the war...

Meanwhile, the final whistle blows at Elland Road, and following a season where Leeds United won the Old Division One, the fans are wondering how their team managed to lose 2-1 to a far weaker side by the name of Queens Park Rangers. The slow trudge up Beeston Hill seems even more arduous for them now. Free parking certainly comes at a cost in the Premier League. Things get worse when they find themselves sitting a traffic jam that takes the car twenty minutes just to get to the other side of Beeston Park.

Outside Throstle Nest, whilst walking back to the car through the dimly lit streets, the last laugh is shared between both sets of fans. Up yonder, some York fans spot a group of indie-looking students with combed fringes standing on the corner of a street, and they break into a chant of "You're just a town full of emos, town full of emos." We could not help but enjoy the quick witticism of our Yorkshire Comrades.

Unlike the battles of the past, both sets of

supporters went home with a smile on their face, without worrying about another week ahead of our noses touching the grindstone.

In comparison, the Leeds United fans are still sat in traffic jams, with far too much time on their hands unavoidably contemplating their teams shocking form of late, and worrying that unless they do more overtime they won't be able to afford the fifty pounds to go see the vital league cup fourth round replay away at Bristol Rovers, clinging on to the dream that they are going to win some silverware this season. Life is not necessarily rosy at the top. Those at the bottom, tend to have more fun.

Disclaimer: Some factual details of this article are embellished to give way to artistic ingenuity.

EUROPE AUGUST 2007

Shit-town Festival, Christiania, Copenhagen

I started the trip by putting a Carbon Jackboot into the Earth. I flew at night from Leeds to Dublin, slept overnight in the airport, flew from Dublin to Malmö (Sweden) in the early morning (accompanied by various Irish crusties), took a bus from the airport to the centre, then a train into Copenhagen. The train ride on a large bridge over the sea was spectacular.

Dancing in the 24 hour Christiania bar named 'Woodstock' was the best part of the festival - a small hut packed with punks dancing on tables and swinging from the rafters, gave the bemused local drunks something to talk about. The 20-minute bike ride to and from the festival was fun - it had been a while since I had rode a bike and the feeling after crashing into a parked car (whilst looking at people) was euphoric. Other highlights included: dressing up as a zombie for the protest march, swimming in various lakes, elephant beer, and Buckfast for breakfast. The only negative was

being alone and feeling shy for long periods of time. The rest is a blur...

The long road from Copenhagen to Berlin

I took a metro to the largest shopping centre in central Europe, which is situated just outside of Copenhagen. The odd thing about the Danish metro is that there are no drivers, it is all controlled electronically, and when sitting at the front I felt like I was on a fairground ride.

I was nervous about attempting the largest hitchhiking trip (850km) of my life, especially as I had been stood on the slip road for about an hour and it started to rain. Just as I was considering giving up, a local tradesman pulled up and said he could take me 10km south of Copenhagen. I jumped at the chance of being in a new place, so took him up on his offer. He was a Manchester United fan, so we had an easy topic of conversation. Football rivalries don't count on't road.

I was dropped off on what I thought was the correct slip road, only to look at my map and it was the wrong highway! Luckily, after waiting 5 minutes, an old German couple picked me up in their camper van and took me to the petrol station on the highway I was supposed to be on. I had estimated to be at this station by 10am, it was mid-day!

I tried hitching by the exit for half an hour, but to no avail. I decided to buy some tobacco and have a rest. Just as I left the shop, a man shouted me and asked what my sign said. After a short discussion he said that he could drop me off near Hamburg. I was planning to go to Berlin via Rostock, but I was desperate to get moving so I accepted his offer. He was Swedish and he was driving with his German wife, to go look after her sick father in Frankfurt. He had some wonderful stories about travelling in his youth. One was about selling fake LSD to members of the US navy, at a port in Spain, during the first cold war. Another was about stealing lots of money from a businessman who tried to touch him up whilst he was hitching a

ride in his car. He even paid for my ferry ticket over to Germany.

Outside of Hamburg, after a moment of uncertainty, I decided to get dropped of at another slip road. After trying to hitch during rush hour, I realised that there was not much Berlin traffic heading through, and the faces of the smug Germans in their expensive cars were winding me up. I decided to walk a few kilometres in hope of getting onto another highway. I ended up walking through a farmer's field, and onto the side of the autobahn! I was tired, sweaty and hadn't a clue where I was or what I was doing. As I climbed the fence to the highway I noticed a turkey had been captured and tied to the fence. I was paranoid that the farmer could see me, so I left it there. I think the turkey's lack of escape was a sign that summed up my hopelessness of trying to hitch on the side of the autobahn.

This wasn't a slip road; cars were zooming by at 150km/h. I soon realised that nobody was going to stop, so I started to walk down the side of the road into oncoming traffic in hope I would find a slip road. I couldn't see one anywhere, then I noticed an SOS box for stranded drivers, and I saw my exit out of here.

I rang a helpline for car drivers and invented a story along the lines of, "I was hitchhiking in a car and somebody kicked me out on the side of the autobahn, and I know that it is illegal to be on the autobahn as a pedestrian, so can you please help me out". The man on the other end of the phone was sympathetic and said that he will call for the police to pick me up. As I was waiting I was preparing for a barrage of questions that I thought the police will ask me, paranoid that they will cause me problems. When they arrived, surprisingly they took my story at face value, and decided to take me to the start of the highway from Hamburg to Berlin! A stroke of luck! The police must reflect the liberal views of the city of Hamburg.

I was back on the highway and it was starting to get dark, the smug German faces were winding me up again. Unsurprisingly it was a

Polish man who picked me up in his brand new flashy BMW. Behind this fancy car was a human soul. Unlike the Germans who had grown up with efficient capitalist models of Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schroeder, the Polish had grown up with Lech Walesa and the Solidarity movement. There is a lot to say about social conditioning from this experience.

The Polish driver could not speak English, so we spoke to each other in German. He was a maniac on the road, and at one he point clocked a speed of 200km/h, constantly forcing cars to pull out of the fast lane. He told me that he drives 300km to Hamburg and back to his town just past the Polish border, 3 times a week, to work as a chef. His reason? In order to earn good money and give a good standard of living to his family, wife and kids. He dropped me off at a petrol station 70km from Berlin, as he was soon to turn off to a road heading to Poland.

I got out and went for a piss, and decided to buy some German tobacco, as the cheap shit I had bought in Denmark had become unsmokeable. I sat down next to a man of Middle Eastern descent, and smoked my cigarette. I started talking to him and he said he was heading to Berlin. He let me join in for the ride, and we talked about the cost of living in different countries in Europe. He was from Lebanon, and had moved to Denmark 10 years ago. He said that Denmark was the nicest European country he had lived in, and that he owned a pizza shop there. I jumped out of the car at an underground station near Berlin Tegel airport and immediately took 2 'U-bahns' to Kreuzberg. The total travel time was 15 hours for a cost of £0.

Kreuzberg, Berlin revisited

It's 11pm and I get out of the U-bahn at Cottbus and wait for my friend Det. I grab a beer from the kiosk and smoke a cigarette by the wall. A group of fuck heads are drinking on a nearby bench. One of them comes over to me and asks if I want to buy some ecstasy. I am in Kreuzberg for 5 minutes and this is the welcome I get. This is my third time in Berlin, and all 3 visits have been in the space of a

year. Unsurprisingly, I spend most of them in Kreuzberg.

I meet Det and we head over to his place. He lives in a predominantly queer, squatted hospital building, and each person has a ward for their bedroom. He arranges for us to lend us some bicycles and we head off to the neighbouring district of Freidrichsomething. We grab a beer from the kiosk and head into a courtyard in the middle of some squatted high rise buildings. There are about 150 people sat around drinking under the dim lighting. Det tells me that there are still lots of squats in this district still, but during the 1980's it was a whole street full of squatted apartments. I meet some of his friends and we talk over a beer. We are accompanied by 3 generations of squatters, a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter. They are all out together, on the piss, and partying!

We then head to a local squat bar called the 'Fish Bowl'. Typical of Berlin, there is about 3 house wagons parked outside. I met some Spanish crusties, and the woman working behind the bar thinks that I am being offensive when I ask her if there are any cold bottles of beer. Apparently she gets it all the time. After the 4th beer, combined with the days travelling, I start to feel exhausted. Det and his friend take me to her place, and she lets me crash in her youngest daughter's room, who was away on holiday. The room was full of toys, crayons, and children's clothes. I crash out as soon as my head hits the pillow. Det and I awake around mid-day, he informs me that after I passed out they went to the top of the building and there was a drinking party, in a swimming pool on the roof! This is the Berlin that you don't find in the guide books.

We head to a local café and have some breakfast, as Det explains more about the history of the Berlin squat scene. We then ride back to Kreuzberg, and take a walk around the local area. We ate lunch at Kreuz Burger, got some soda, and headed to the river to sit down and chill out for the afternoon. On the way back we check out the queer Wagonplatz, which is a squatted piece of land where people

live in trailers.

In the evening, Det went to work and I stayed in his room, surfing the internet and preparing my food for the next day. I spent a total of 36 hours in Kreuzberg, and before I knew it, I was on a 12 hour journey to Krakow in Poland, staying fresh, checking out something new, and full of wonder as to what the trip would throw up next.

I had originally planned to get the 6am train via Warsaw, but the seat reservation was way too high (20 euors!) So I decided to get the slower direct train a few hours later. I was too tired to go walking, so to kill time I sat outside Berlin Hauptbahnhof and tried begging for change. This (unsurprisingly) yielded no results, so I helped myself to a copy of The Guardian from the kiosk. I sat and read about what was going on back home, and just like my predicament, nothing much was.

Krakow & Auschwitz – The most beautiful and horrible parts of Poland

As the train is riding through the forest in Poland, I can't stop picturing the scene in the film 'Schindler's List' where a train full of Jews is riding into Poland. One of the Jews glances out the window and sees a small German boy gesturing a cut-throat with his hand because he knows they are on their way to death. Each dead end clearing in the forest I see seems like a path to death. I open a beer and change the daydream.

After arriving at Krakow Glowny, I was greeted by my friend Asia, whom I met when she was living and working in Leeds. On the drive to her house she was explaining that the district she lived in- Nowa Huta- had the highest stabbing rate in Krakow. Out of the window I could see endless rows of tall grey Soviet tower blocks, and potholes in the roads occasionally broke up these views. Thankfully there was no impending doom, as she turned down a small country road, and we headed into a nicer looking part of the district. Her parents rent

out the ground floor of their house to students. Asia had previously contacted them and they kindly allowed for me to stay in their apartment whilst I was in town. I dropped off my bags, and we took a tram into the centre.

All I had eaten all day was four cheese sandwiches, made with black bread and no butter; not the most appetising of food but it kept me going. Asia took me to a restaurant in the main square. It was a typical tourist trap, and the menu was full of lousy American style food, such as burger and chips, ribs, and steak. Not wanting to rock the boat with my friend, I ordered a mushroom soup and had done with my hunger.

We then took a walk in the pouring rain to a 'rock' themed bar, which she had obviously taken me to because I look like a rocker. The place was soulless and full of the usual paraphernalia that one would find in any rock bar the world over. Thankfully there was the odd Iron Maiden track that broke up the onslaught of bad Polish nu-metal. We sat, drank a few beers, and told each other our news. After an hour or so the conversation dried up, and I could not help but think about how different we are.

The final destination of the night was an art bar infested by hippies. The place was heaving with dreadlocks and the dance floor was packed with people dancing to a Polish reggae band. Asia informed me that reggae is one of the most popular forms of music in Poland at the moment. It seems that after 50 years of oppression the Poles are now going wild for music, even if it is badly played reggae music. To round off the night we had a couple of vodkas (when in Rome), and after the second I nearly threw up over the floor, not remembering that they serve vodka in 50ml glasses in Poland. Back home I passed out on the sofa, as my head was spinning all over the place.

The next day Asia had to work, so I decided to visit Krakows most famous tourist destination, Auschwitz concentration camp .At Krakow bus station I boarded a bus to Oswiecim and met a young Irish lad who was travelling around

Europe. He couldn't believe that I had heard of Bohemians Football Club from Dublin, let alone having seen them play. The bus journey took around 90 minutes, and the vodka hangover was eased by slurping a yoghurt drink. Upon arrival, I entered the museum of Auschwitz. Part of it had been kept in its original state, and the many huts that housed the victims had been transformed into exhibitions covering a wide range of topics. Despite the vast amount of horrific photos, one of the most striking pieces was a large display of all the shoes that were worn by the victims, in a room 10 meters long, 5 meters deep, and 3 meters tall. It appropriately managed to convey the scale of the atrocities that were carried out there.

During my walk around the grounds, I noticed that the imposing nature of the camp is most strikingly represented by the barbed wire fences that surround and segregate the inner of the camp and the watchtowers that overlook it. There is no means of escape and every means of control. There are a huge amount of exhibitions and information inside the museum and I could have easily spent a whole day there, yet due to time restrictions of the last bus I had to move on.

Although Auschwitz manages to thoroughly provide an image of what happened between 1940 and 1945, it is the neighbouring site of Birkenau that beyond any doubt manages to portray the magnitude of the slaughter and imprisonment. The camp covers an area of 425 acres, and consisted of 300 buildings, with only 67 remaining in tact. Of the 233 that were burnt or demolished, the outlines of the ground still remain. The camp is still predominantly in its original state, and it was here that the Nazis constructed their instruments of mass destruction, namely: four crematoria with gas chambers, two makeshift gas chambers, cremation pyres and pits. On entering the site, I climbed to the top of the main watchtower. From here you can witness the size of the place, which is divided in two by a train track that was used to transport the victims to the camp.

It was a blazing hot day, and I walked all

around the site, taking in as many sites as I could along a circular route. By this stage my thoughts were getting intense, trying to picture myself as a Jew living in an Auschwitz winter, and at this point I decided to listen to music. The Holy Bible by The Manic Street Preachers seemed like a perfect album to sum up my mood and the atmosphere of Birkenau.

On the bus home we passed a football ground, and it appeared that Wisla Krakow Football Club were playing. I jumped off the bus and tried to find a way into the ground. It turned out that it was a game against their league rivals from Bialystock, and the fans milling around the stadium weren't waiting to enter the ground; they were just the unlucky people who couldn't get a ticket for the game. I was a bit gutted as I enjoy going to watch continental football. After speaking to some locals I found out that there was no way of getting into the ground unless I bought a season ticket, so I gave up and decided walk back into town.

When I arrived back in Krakow I was physically & emotionally drained from the experience at Auschwitz. I went to a vegetarian milk bar and treated myself to a chilli and carrot juice to boost my energy levels. For a few days during the Valhalla Pacifists / Kneel Buchanan / MC Positive Bastard Europe Tour in 2006 we took with us a Polish travel punk called Marian. He proved invaluable to us, helping us to find venues in Eastern Europe by speaking the native tongue. He is from Krakow, and unfortunately he wasn't in town that day, yet he gave me some contacts. I went to the house of one of these people, and they were surprised to see me, and they were wondering which Marian had put me in touch with them. It wasn't until I showed them a photo of him on my camera that they realised. I hung out with them for a while, drank some beer, and watched them making silk screens. The food caught up with me and I decided to take a nap in the spare room for a few hours.

I awoke around 11pm to a text message from Asia, saying that she will be finishing work at mid-night and that I should meet her and her friend in the main square. I said my goodbyes

to Marian's friends, and I walked back into town. I bought a couple of beers from the kiosk, and as I was half an hour early, started to drink one on a bench in the main square. A moment later and that Irish lad who I'd met on the bus walks past. I offer him a beer and we sit and have a chat.

All of a sudden, two policemen come up and inform us that it is illegal to drink on the square, and that we have to pay a €50 fine. In a moment of ingenuity I spot the remains of a fight scenario at a nearby bar, and I told the copper that we had moved over here from the bar in order to protect ourselves. He kept telling us that we were breaking the law and that we had to pay the fine or go to jail. I was adamant and kept arguing, and I was reinforcing my story by shaking and looking shocked. Eventually he tried to bargain with us and offer us a '2 for 1' fine. It was at this point I realised he was trying to blag all he could get from us. He could see that I was not going to back down, so he made us pour the beer away and sent us on our way. When I recalled the story later in the night to some Polish people, they were amazed – not at what happened, but by the police being able to speak English!

Irish lad and I met up with Asia and her workmate Piotr. He took us straight to an underground bar in the square and got two rounds of strawberry vodka, another two rounds later and we were on our way. We then went to a typical Eastern European 'club', which was spread over a few floors, with each room playing different music, and full of tourists. I bought a round of Bols (vodka) and Apple Juice, mistake number one. According to Piotr, only Zubrowvka (Bison Grass Vodka) can be drunk with Apple Juice. We all finished our drinks but he was so offended that he went and bought another one. There was only one toilet in the whole place, and it started getting annoying having to queue for the toilets, especially as I go fairly regularly when I am drinking.

We didn't stay for long, and we headed across town to one of Piotr's favourite bars. This was because they tolerated weed smoking, it played an eclectic selection of music, they

served alcohol all night, and there were little or no tourists there. Irish lad didn't make it, we suspected he went back to the 'club' to try and 'hook up' with a fellow tourist. We drank more and Piotr smoked weed. I was starting to lag, and Piotr disappeared. 10 minutes later he re-appeared with proper shots of espresso and glasses of water. Who knows where he got them from at 4am? That woke me up and I started back on the vodka. Again there was only one toilet in the place. I met this English older guy in the queue and he let me piss in the sink while he was going in the toilet. He told me he lived and worked in Krakow, and it turned out he was an Ipswich Town fan. He was happy to meet a fellow Brit footy fan, so we sat at the bar for a while talking about football as he kept the vodka shots coming.

Later on, back at Piotr's table, we met an interesting character called Magdarius. He had grey hair, was kitted out in grey 'adventure' clothes, and had a walking stick and knapsack. He must have been in his 50s. What he was doing in a bar at 6am I have no idea. We all left the club together and he invited us to his place. On the way Piotr and I went into the supermarket to buy shandy. I was making him laugh so much by doing stupid walks down the isles. The laughing got so out of hand that I dropped a bottle all over the floor that we promised to pay for. Then came the classic drunk scenario; the attendant shows us the price for the beer, we look into our pockets and none of us have any money! Luckily Asia was on hand to mop up the damage on her credit card.

Magdarius lived nearby, and he kindly put on a breakfast spread for us. I don't think his wife was impressed at him bringing a bunch of drunks home at an ungodly hour on a Sunday morning. She had to get up a couple of times to get us to shut up.

Piotr and I were perched on the balcony smoking cigarettes and drinking red wine, and it was then that we both had a realisation that we were both in touch with the spiritual side. He told me that many 'non-religious' pilgrims come to Krakow, as it is believed that the

area that Krakow Castle is built on has a huge energy source underneath it. It was then (in an unrelated but equally as revealing moment) that Piotr involuntarily became a demonstration of the power of the metaphysical world, as a flock of pigeons speedily flew off from the courtyard 5 stories below, which was signalled by nothing more than a slight flick of Piotr's wrist.

After breakfast we all left the house, and Asia took us in her car to the hill that is the highest point in central Krakow. It was quite a harsh ascent for us drunken souls, yet probably nothing too strenuous for the common man. It was a little cloudy, yet we had an OK view of the city and the woodland below. At the summit, Piotr was smoking weed, as Magdarius was stood pondering, whilst I was looking at an area at the foot of the other side of the hill. I kept thinking that it looked like it was part of a scene of Schindlers list. All of a sudden, a stranger appears on the summit, and he has a hat on with the words 'Police'. Piotr shat his pants, and hid his spliff, thinking it was the police. It turns out that he was a Spanish tourist, and he was doing a 'Schindlers List' tour of Krakow. It turns out that the place I was looking at was a place that was used during the filming of Schindlers list. The mad bastard even had a guidebook to prove it. Surely it wasn't only a co-incidence that he turned up, soon after I was thinking about it. Piotr was just relieved that it wasn't the police coming to take him to prison.

After a while, we decided to head back to the car. On the way home we dropped off Piotr & Magdarius, and we got back to Asia's parents house about 11am to get some well-needed shut-eye. The last thing I remember is falling asleep in the back of the car and spilling beer all over myself. By that point I was drained: physically and spiritually.

The next day, Asia took me to a local mall where I tried to purchase some cheap computer parts. Unfortunately, the price of consumer goods is now similar to those in the UK, now that Poland is an integral part of the European Union. The mall was busy as there

was a pop festival taking place in the car park, with one of Poland's biggest young pop singers headlining the event. The car park was full of tracksuit-clad teenagers drinking cheap alcohol. Needless to say we didn't stick around.

Later on we went out to the pizzeria that Piotr works at. I have no idea how he managed to get into work after the previous nights shenanigans. We had some pizza, in which Piotr managed to get us a discount on. Piotr was clearly suffering, and as it was a quiet day, his boss let him take off the rest of the day to come and hang out with us.

In the evening we went to a bar in the Jewish area of the city. It was dark, and dimly lit by many candles. There was a punk working, and after scanning the flyers it seemed that this was the place where the punk gigs happen in Krakow. Piotr informed me that this is a family run bar, as he passed me a shot of locally produced spirits, which was like Parlenka. It was at least 60% proof and it tasted disgusting, and I think I offended Piotr by puking it back up over the floor. I further managed to offend him again by lighting a roll-up using a candle. He said that the candle flame represented children who had died in a boat accident in Poland. Despite these incidents we had a good chat about things, and it seemed that we weren't just talking shit to each other the night before. I had a couple of beers, but I was still feeling rough from the night before. At the end of the night we tried to find some place to go bowling, yet everywhere was closed at midnight on a Sunday.

Anyone who thinks that things are cheap in Poland is deluded. Whilst things are cheap for us due to the strength of the pound, for the Poles they aren't. People marvel that it costs 50p for a beer in the bar, yet when bar workers are only paid £1 per hour, does that make things in Poland cheap for the locals? And with consumer goods at similar prices to the UK, and wages low, it is very hard for the Polish people to acquire the luxuries that we are so used to having in Western Europe.

I didn't know what to expect from this part32

of the trip, yet Poland turned out to be my favourite part, combining cultural and party experiences. I certainly managed to make the most of my time there.

Budapest, Hungary – a new place visited in the east

I leave Krakow at 7am, take three different trains, and arrive in Budapest at 5pm. I spent most of the trip reading 'Human Punk' by John King, smoking roll ups, and eating pre packed sandwiches. Again my knowledge of obscure football teams amazes two Italian men when I tell them my favourite Italian football team is Livorno. Upon arrival, I went to get some Hungarian money. There was somebody outside offering a higher exchange rate. On most trips I exchange money with ordinary people as they have higher rates, but only if they are people that have traded with people I know, or if I am in the presence of a local who can verify the authenticity of the money. This time I went for the safer option and probably got ripped off by the extortionate rates of a train station bureau.

My first port of call was the underground rail station, which had recently been built to celebrate the millennium. It was of very modern design and typical of the east in that it went deep into the ground, probably as a result of it having to go under the Danube river. I got off at Moscow Square and then took a street tram a few stops out of the centre. Budapest is a city which is a combination of two cities, Buda and Pest. I was in the Buda side, where it is quieter and more affluent.

I was visiting my friend Mirijam, who lived in the same flats as I, when I was studying at the University of Helsinki. This was the first time we had met for four years. She resides in Buda and works as a journalist for a Hungarian newspaper that is printed in English. I also met a French man named Francoise, who used to live in Pest, and now works as a tennis coach in Paris. After getting a refreshing shower, we got some beers and headed off to the hills in the centre. It was the National day of Hungary, and every year it is celebrated by a huge fireworks

display that is launched from the freedom monument and on the bridges of the Danube. After the display we headed to an open air bar and hung out with some of Mirijams friends. It started to piss it down with rain, so we sat under a marquee wrapped in blankets and drinking our own booze and liquor. The rain was so ferocious that it sounded like someone had opened bags of frozen peas onto the roof of the marquee. We sat up late talking about politics before driving home and going to bed.

Budapest is renowned for its thermal baths, which date back to the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. The next morning I set off early to find its most famous, The Gellert Baths. I spent two hours looking for them without any success. I found out later that the X on the map I had was in the wrong place, and during my search I had nearly 2 weeks of boozing behind me, which gave me the fear, preventing me from plucking up the courage to ask people where it was, in fear that people would think I am a dumb western tourist. P-A-R-A-N-O-I-A! Despite not being able to find it, I managed to see the huge freedom monument that overlooks Budapest from the top of Gellert Hill and got to see some fantastic views of the city.

Reverting to plan B, I decided to go to the thermal baths in Peoples Park, which are used more by the general public, as opposed to tourists and snobs. Despite it being the peoples baths, it still cost around £8 to get in. Hungary is not a typical Eastern Europe country in the fact that the pound does not go a long way. Once I had changed into my swimming shorts, the long-haired attendant wrote a number on the inside of my locker, locked it, then gave me a band with the corresponding number. Inside the building there was an array of thermal baths, heated at varying temperatures. There were also a plethora of saunas, steam rooms, and ice cold pools. Outside there were two massive pools, one heated and one non-heated. It was a sunny day, so most people were outside catching the sun. I spent most of my time in the thermal pools, 're-energising', and alternating between the brutally hot saunas and the unforgiving ice cold pools,³³

'working on my circulation'. I spent a total of about 4 hours in the baths, determined to get my moneys worth.

I took a trolley bus out of peoples park, and got dropped off by an underground station. As per usual on a trip abroad, I was using the public transport for free in hope of avoiding a rare appearance of the ticket inspectors. When I got down the escalator there were ticket inspectors, so I shot straight back up and into the street in search of a tram stop. I had to walk for an hour before finding the correct one, and the heat was making me sweaty and tired. Eventually I got on the correct tram. As we were pulling away from Moscow Square, some plain clothed inspectors showed their true colours and started to ask me for a ticket. I pretended that I was Finnish, cursing them in the Finnish language and pretending I could not speak English. They informed me that they were going to call the police. Luckily as they were about to do this, the tram doors opened, and I bolted out the door and into the woods. For the next hour I could hear police sirens nearby, and I had to keep a low profile in the woods and I took an extremely long, back way to Mirijam's house, in fear of being caught. I was relieved when I got back to the house, yet the fear, sweat and sneaking around cancelled out all the time I had spent 'relaxing' in the baths.

On the last night, Mirijam, Francoise and I went to a 'cheap local redneck bar' as Francoise described it, over in Pest. At the bar they were showing the Hungary vs. Italy football game on the TV screens. I was gutted to find out that it was in Budapest and that I could have gone, especially as Hungary went on to beat the world champions, three goals to one. After the game we had some Becherovka (east European spirit) and talked to some tennis coaches. We rounded off the night by going to one of Pests most popular bars. We had to take a lift to get to it, and it was situated on a roof of a large building. There was quite a lot of people around, but I was too tired and drunk to enjoy it. So we decided to call it a night and get a taxi home.

Early on, my plan had been to see a few sites in Budapest, but to spend most of my time relaxing away from the hectic party atmosphere and bustling adventures that usually encompass my trips. On the whole, it did turn out that way, yet my encounters with the ticket inspectors and getting as drunk as a mute on the last night, ensured that it was 'business as usual' again.

Bratislava, Slovakia Finally explored

Another early morning train, and it was bye bye Budapest. After a change of trains in Gyor, I was soon on my way to Bratislava. I arrived in Bratislava at the Petržalka station, which is the main hub for international trains. I was met by Thomas & Teresa (Slovakian punks who used to live in Leeds) and Jan (from Leeds). I was pleased to be hanging out with the punks again. We went out for a few cold beers in the evening to celebrate. Jan was trying to get me to go clubbing in town, but I couldn't be arsed.

The next day we went to Bratislava's most infamous gig place, 'The Garage'. The place lives up to its name. By the main road and an industrial area lies a few long lanes of car garages, where people leave their cars. Some local punks rent one of the garages, and as well as a band practice space, it is used to host punk gigs. The bands play inside, as the crowd enjoy the bands from the tarmac, some lucky enough to be under a makeshift pagoda if the rain starts to fall.

Despite it being mainly being used for DIY gigs, bigger band such as Fucked Up & Municipal Waste have played there. Tonight there was a local band topping the bill that played metal-era Discharge style punk. There were a lot of people out for the occasion with it being a Thursday night. I made the mistake of buying Slovakian beer from the local petrol station; it tasted like a fart in a bottle. Thomas informed me that there is no such thing as good Slovakian beer, which explains why most beer on sale is imported, mainly from its former comrades the Czech Republic. Why

Slovakia chose independence from the Czechs is something I can't understand. The Czech lands generated the majority of the then Czechoslovakia's economy. Furthermore, there seemed to be little or no discrimination of the Slovak people despite the economic stronghold of the Czech people. The result of the break up has left Slovakia much poorer and more susceptible to exploitative foreign investment and European Union control.

After the pub, we walked (for what seemed hours) into the centre, to drink some beer with the local punks. There was no 'special place' where the punks drank, so they congregated outside one the bars by the old town and drank beer outside there. Although I suspect that this was one of the cheaper bars and the music inside was so loud and terrible that drinking outside was the only option. It was a warm summers night so nobody seemed to mind. Another friend from Slovakia, also named Thomas, had hith-hiked from another city to meet up with me; so I bought him a few beers and we talked about things for a few hours. A bunch of us got the night bus back to Thomas' place, where we soon crashed out all over the floor.

Saturday turned out to be a wholesome day, and to start proceedings we decided to go swimming. In order to get to the swimming place we made the most of the free bus that Tesco lays on to get to the lake. This is typical of Tesco, in a bid to gain customers and drive out local supermarkets, by having a free shuttle bus that transports people free of charge, from the city centre to their hypermarket on the edge of the city.

The lake was only a short walk from the hypermarket, and on this blazing hot day, seemed to be popular with the locals. We found a quiet spot and spent an hour or so, swimming and drinking a beer or two. It was here that we met Tereza's dad, who joined us for a swim. Following this, we went to local café, and I had a glass (hand-pulled!) of Kofola. For those not in the know, Kofola is the Czech regions answer to Coke. It is not as sweet as Coke, and has more of an authentic

Cola taste.

We then headed to Terezas dad's house, and on the way (in a small district outside Bratislava) I noticed a 'help find Madeline McCann' poster stuck to a lamppost. I couldn't believe it! How could anyone think that someone living here would have any information on a British girl that went missing in Portugal? It's quite a tragic thing to see that a wealthy family has enough resources and media manipulation to turn the hunt for their daughter into a global phenomenon, when thousands of ordinary children go missing all the time throughout the world, which seem to go relatively un-noticed.

Terezas dad has a bar as part of his house, which has been running for many years. It is only open on Wednesdays, or for when special guests are in town. On this day, Jan and I were the special guests, and we became honorary members of this drinking establishment. What was even more special is that we were drinking spirits that were made using berries from the Tatra Mountains, which were illegal to pick. The drink was sharp and strong, and quite hard to stomach. Terezas father was a great host, and had many a tale to tell. Before we left, we signed the obligatory (well detailed) guestbook, and we felt pleased to have been at such a secret watering hole.

On my last day in Bratislava I was feeling rough, and things had started to catch up with me. During the daytime we went out for a meal at a restaurant/bar in the centre, and I treated myself to some local cuisine. It was nothing special, yet it did enough to quell the hunger. By the evening I was really starting to feel full of cold. Thomas made me a 'cold killer' tea, which has now become an integral part of any 'cold-related' remedy. Basically it was chilli, ginger, garlic and sage; boiled in a pan. It was dark coloured and tasted horrible; yet 18 hours later I was well on my way to a full recovery.

That night I took an over-night sleeper train from Bratislava to Dresden. I was sharing a cabin with an Austrian dude, who like me, only wanted to sleep through the journey. I sipped

some more tea, and then I slipped off into a sweat ridden 8 hours of slumber. The next morning I felt so much better, and the tea had got rid of the worst of my cold. Unfortunately the train was late, so I missed my connection. After an hour of waiting around the station reading a stolen copy of The Guardian, I was off on the Deutsche Bahn Inter City Express Train, stopping only to change in Berlin. Thankfully I left plenty of time on my schedule, in case of such an event, and I still had plenty of time to get to the football game on time.

Another brief stopover in Hamburg

Last time I visited Hamburg was during the football world cup in 2006. I was on my way from Copenhagen to Cologne, and I decided to get off in Hamburg along the way. The main reason was to go see St. Paulis football ground, and as I arrived in so happened that the 'fanladen' was situated next to it. I went inside, yet it was too busy and expensive for beer- so I went to the St Pauli club bar and watched the game in there, drinking beer at half the price, and supporting the local team. Result!

I took the same underground tram to St. Pauli, which is 8 or 9 stops from Hamburg Central Railway Station. Thankfully I still got to the ground in plenty of time, despite the late train to Dresden. I picked up my ticket from Heikko, who runs the St. Pauli fan laden, which basically keeps tickets aside for foreign fans. I had emailed him a fortnight before and he kept one aside for me. It cost only 15 euros and it was for the home stand. Unfortunately there were no tickets for the anarchist stand, so I had to settle for second best.

The ground was busy, and I treated myself to a couple of fish butties, as all I had eaten all day was a couple of croissants. Inside the ground, they were only selling local beer, named 'Astra' and the food outlets were all run by local businesses. I liked this. Although I wasn't feeling 100%, the fact that it is still legal to drink football in the stands at German football games was enough to persuade me to get a

pint and watch the game. It was a blazing hot day, and here I was in the middle of the stand (yes, you could actually stand up and watch a football game!) supping a pint of beer whilst watching the teams enter the pitch.

With the amount of black clothes, leather, patches and skulls on display, it actually seemed that I was at a heavy metal concert for a moment. Songs such as 'Come on you boys in Brown' and 'You'll Never Walk Alone' were regularly sung throughout the game. St. Pauli took the lead in the first half, scoring a near post header into the goal at our side of the pitch. They held their nerve, and despite a few close moments at the end, managed to finish up victorious over FC Koblenz. It was a great feeling to sing 'You'll Never Walk Alone' during the closing minutes of the game. I certainly hope to be going to watch St. Pauli again in the future.

I had an hour to kill after the game, so I went to check out Hamburg's renowned red-light district on the 'Reeperbahn'. It was a late Sunday afternoon, so not much was happening; the bars were dead, and all there was to do was to check out a few porn shops, which weren't much different to other throughout Europe. I made it to the train station on time to take a 3-hour journey to Mulheim an der Ruhr, changing at Essen on the way.

Relaxing in the Ruhr

In Mulheim I went to the AZ to meet up with Robert, Mikesch and Jenny. There was some Eastern European hardcore bands playing – Robert was super pissed off that only 12 people paid to get in. I was still getting over my cold a little, so I sat around in the bar drinking juice, even though I had paid into the gig.

After a good nights sleep, I spent the next day relaxing. Jenny and I went for Ice Cream Coffees in the afternoon, and that is all I can remember from that day. Memory doesn't serve me too well, yet I can imagine it was just hanging out and relaxing at their house. Another early night, as I had to meet the Dean Dirg people at 7am the next morning.

Wuppertal to Leeds On't road with Dean Dirg

"I don't like your band" is not a sentiment I would relay to Dean Dirg. Given the fact that they recently played a gig in Leipzig to 450 people, shows that many people certainly don't think in this way. It is the snotty sentiment of said song that immediately made me listen up and take notice.

On the ride from Wuppertal to Brighton, the band was fairly quiet and we rarely conversed about much. Yet anyone who thinks that Germans don't have a sense of humour should listen to the comically titled 'Get back in the trenches' from their latest release 'Raus'. After the singer, Dorf, announced the name of the song at the gig in Leeds, a shocked punter from Harrogate was quoted as saying "how can these Germans be so blasé". The beauty in their lyrical content is that they manage to offend people without saying anything overtly offensive at all.

The gig in Brighton (Hove) is also a benefit gig for 'No Borders', so perhaps there is no danger of any trench warfare in the future. The three local support bands, The Shitty Limits, The Sticks and The Sceptres, all played their own take on garage-punk, which is currently the flavour of the month in today's hardcore punk scene. Dean Dirg, who are one of the best and most popular bands in said genre, tear through their set like a German machine gunner advancing through a battalion of Tommys carrying pistols.

The next stage of the German blitz took us to Guilford; a town outside of London with nothing much happening beside one of the healthiest UK punk-rock scenes. Support band, Los Mendozas, who are dressed in Mexican 'Lucha Libre' wrestling costumes entertain the crowd with a combination of thrash music and theatrical dialogue, bringing a whole new meaning to borderline racist national stereotyping. After spending a few days in Germany where a slight mention of nationalist humour is almost illegal, Los Mendozas were

welcome refreshment. The crowd went mental during Dean Dirgs set, looking like a frenzied bunch of soldiers at the aftermath of a shell attack.

Before I could shout 'Mustard gas' in the Dean Dirg van after a breakfast of beans on toast, I was back in Leeds before I knew it. For Dean Dirg, getting the Leeds crowd to move was about as difficult as Germany conquering the whole of France; it never happened! Despite this, the crowd was obviously appreciating it in their stiff upper lip way, and Dean Dirg certainly weren't bored. Three days of the Dirg's garage party punk was a great way to round off my trip.

RECORD REVIEWS

Review Scores

- 1 – Crap**
- 2 – Sub-standard**
- 3 – OK**
- 4 – Decent**
- 5 - Great**

7" Reviews

Acts Of Sedition – S/T

Bay Area Youth playing Crusty Hardcore that is just as good as any other band from said area. They may be coming to Europe in the future, watch out for them! (4)

Spacement Records

Blockshot – Polyglamorous EP

Keyboard driven riot grrl indie punk from West Germany. The first track is a wonderful pop song, and the second track veers off into strange town. Song three is welcomed, reverting back to the melodic indie pop formula. Whereas song four revisits strange town, and has a darker feel to it. Altogether this record is a mixed bag of sweets. (3)

F Spin Records

Burning the Prospect – S/T

His Hero Is Portland style Crust from Boston, England. Relentless pummelling of the D-Beat like there is no tomorrow, on this one-sided 7". Recording quality lets it down a bit. (3)

Right to Refuse Records

Civil Terror –Rising

These guys are a strange bunch of people, yet they somehow manage to get together and play some killer HC, which is packed with heavyweight punch riffs and obnoxious hate-core lyrics. There are some great bands coming out of the Netherlands at the moment. I just wish they had put 'Where the fuck did you learn to drive' from the demo tape onto this 9 song 7". Check it out! (5)

Crucial Attack Records

Clusterfuck / Ratbyte – Split 7"

Clusterfuck play US style 80s HC – the jerky edginess of the DKs combined the straight up sound of Reagan Youth played over 6 tracks. Ratbytes opening intro starts off like a mix between Police Truck by the DKs and an Agent Orange riff before blasting into 4 tracks of fast 80s US style HC – Sounds Great! (3/4)

Party Time Records

The Deathskulls / Shredder – Split 7"

The Deathskulls are true aggressive working class hardcore from the mean streets of Southend. – Powerful like a knee in the face. Shredder from Belgium do exactly as their name suggests, shred through 5 songs of fast HC - Unremitting like taking a hundred hand slap from E. Honda of Street Fighter 2 fame. (4/4)

Peter Bower Records

Disclose / Flyblown – Split 7"

Total Crust Devastation! You should know these bands by now. I will give you a clue to their sound; it starts and ends with D. (4/3)

On the Verge Records

Easpa Measa / Nemetona – Split 7"

Easpa Measa offers us two tracks of raging crust with the odd tempo shift, both songs from the demo. Nemetona are from Japan, and play distorted, angry brutal crust. (4/3)

Acclaim Records

Gentlemen's Pistols – Just A Fraction

37 1968-1972 era sleazy rock n roll – catchy melodic

on one side, low down dirty and down tempo on the other – Sexy! (4)

Art Goes Pop Records

Kakka – Hata 77 – Kakkahata Tappa

Finnish Chart Toppers KH77 bring us 7 tracks of 77 influenced punk/oi rhythm combined with catchy pop-punk riffs (sounds strange but somehow works well) – Most Finns swear by the hilarious lyrics, shame us non-Finnish speakers can't relate – No Hope For The Kids meets Geoffrey O'cott (4 or 5 if Finnish speaker)

Deaf Forever Records

Kakka Hata 77 – WTC Rajahtaa

Second release, second pressing on yellow vinyl. More of the same here – it is no wonder that these guys are a big deal in Finland. The name translates to 'The Shits 77'. (4 or 5 if Finnish Speaker)

Combat Rock Industry Records

Kieltolaki – Totaalisen Tuhon Huominen EP

Fast as fuck hardcore from Finland. It's the classic Finnish HC style taken up another gear. One of the best bands to come out of Finland recently, and this slab of wax confirms it – Raging! (5)

Combat Rock Industry Records

The Kind That Kills – S/T

Swedish Clean Cut HC badly imitating Endstand. (2)

Soul City Records

Kyklooppien Sukupuutto / Death Token – Split 7"

KS from Finland plays chaotic HC Punk that comes at you from all angles, suitable for those who are and like it a bit mental – Originally Unorthodox, this record does little justice to their live performances. DT from Denmark play in a similar vein to KS, yet not as crazy and a bit more crusty – More for those who can function in 'normal' life from time to time. (3/3)

Hate Records

Lets Grow – Neverending Story

Raw, relentless HC Punk all the way from Serbia! (4)

Know Records

Moshtradamosh – Metal of Kings

Finnish punks playing thrash metal, with a grind/crust crossover. (3)

Thrashwax Records

Out Cold / The Billbondsmen – Split 7"

Out Cold from Boston, USA are without doubt (one of) the best hardcore band in the world. Their fast, aggression fuelled riffs combined with pissed off lyrics make me want to smash up everything around me. The rage has never left this band. The Billbondsmen from Detroit, USA were average when I saw them at Trashfest 2007, and here they just don't cut the mustard. I think any HC band that dares share a record with Out Cold are always going to come up sounding distinctly average. (5/2)

Schizophrenic Records

Rat Byte / Concrete Facelift – Split 7"

Rat Byte comes at us with skater themed US HC – more rocking and less focus on speed than on the split with Clusterfuck. Concrete Facelift continue the skater theme, relentless US HC, and a couple of live tracks to boot. (3/3)

Party Time Records

Ripping Headache – S/T

Here we have 8 tracks of fast HC punk, full of catchy hooks and rocking riffs, coming all the way from Copenhagen. (4)

Adult Crash Records

The Shining – The Word Is Fiction (Double 7")

Hailing from Amsterdam in The Netherlands, The Shining are perhaps one of the finest HC Thrash bands around at the moment. Loads of rippers here for your coin – Essential! (5)

Pick Up Records

Silence / Burning the Prospect – Split 7"

Silence – A grim, dark, depressing post-apocalyptic crusty sound combining parts of Tragedy with parts of Section Eleven, in a raw style – unsurprising coming from a place like Poland. BTP – One of the best UK bands around – Loud, heavy, brutal (melodic at times) crust with predominantly Swedish & American D-Beat Influences. From Boston, not Stockholm. (3/4)

Right to Refuse Records

Solid Decline – Back In Line

7 tracks of crusty hardcore from Berlin, what a relentless live band – fast hardcore with riffs, yeah! (4)

38Heart First Records

Sotatila – S/T

This band is from Austria and Chile, and they have a Finnish singer; truly international. The musical style is an ode to 80s & 90s Finnish Hardcore Punk, which is delivered with equal amounts of venom as their predecessors. Raw, and fucked up, yet still extremely listenable; this music is timeless! (5)

Kamaset Levyt Records

Strong As Ten – S/T

High energy, light speed hardcore from France that is faster than a Nazi Soldier retreating after the Normandy invasion, only let down by a song cutting off at the end of side one. Complete with Minor Threat cover. I do wanna hear this. (4)

Shogun Records

Strung Up – S/T

Seven rip-raging tracks of straight up hardcore with killer guitar licks and angry anti-everything lyrics, from USA. (4)

Self Release

The Tangled Lines / Dick Cheney – Split 7"

TL (from Dresden) play fast hardcore, and have that unpredictable 'where will it go next' style, similar to old Hero Dishonest – distinctive female vocals adding extra flavour – complete with excellent cover of No Direction by Gorilla Biscuits! DC (from Russia) are more straight up fast hardcore with more controlled break downs. (5/3)

Refuse Records

Tunguska / De Novissimis – Split 7"

Tunguska from Ireland/Poland give us 2 tracks on a dark slab of fast semi-epic post-apocalyptic gloomy crust. De Novissimis from Ireland give us one track of raw bassy atmospheric neo-apocalyptic noisy grind, which makes me think of the dark ages. (3/3)

Superfi Records

The Wankys – Noise Punk EP

Like it says on the tin – Raw fucked up and nose holding vocals, Japanese influenced uber distorted noise punk – An assault on all metaphysical senses. (4)

Noise and Distortion Records

War All The Time / Whole In The Head – Split 7"

Scene veterans WATT pummel through 3 tracks

of Total(itar) Relentless Fast Crust – Sweden vs. Bradford with original thoughtful lyrics. Scene veterans WITH speed through a snotty array of 6 raging anti-capitalist blasts with the occasional stop for fresh air. (4/3)

Self Release

Yhteiskunnan Ystävät? – S/T

Finnish HC punk with a raw demo recorded feel. Too slow, tally ho! (2)

Roku Records

12" Reviews

Confusa – S/T

Straight out of Finland we have Confusa, with their melodic, rocking, riot-girl influenced, punk rock. It's bouncy and danceable, just a shame I can't understand the lyrics. It has 14 tracks and comes on white vinyl. (4)

Combat Rock Industry

The Dauntless Elite – Graft

Here we have a heavyweight slab of wax that comes in a gatefold sleeve. This is their first full length since the release of the excellent Security EP. Here we have more of the same dual vocal, stop/start, sing-along pop-punk, which makes them one of Leeds' finest. (4)

Bombed Out Records

Dean Dirg – S/T

12 recordings from 2002, which sounds rawer than their recent stuff. This is garage punk at its best, and easy to skank to. Highlight tracks include Rock Out, Do It Right and Fuck Yeah. They are one of the most fun bands around at the moment. (5)

Stereodrive! Records

Easpa Measa / Silence – Split 12"

Easpa Measa from Dublin in Ireland, are a dual vocal crust assault, who treat us to two new songs (one good, one bad) and one old one (Morrigan Song – epic classic). Silence, from Lublin in Poland, plays dark, brooding crust, similar to His Hero Is Gone. (4/4)

Sadness of Noise Records

Family Man – S/T

This is German hardcore with an early 80s USA Hardcore feel to parts of it. The singing is reminiscent of the singer from Los Crudos. It comes with a free poster, which features the band

taking the piss out of macho hardcore. (4)

Violent Change Records

Geoffrey Oi!Cott – The Good, The Bad & The Googly

12 tracks of cricket themed Oi! Rocking riffs and hilarious lyrics. White Vinyl, and includes a copy of the album on CD. The best song 'Lager Before Women' is an instant Oi! Classic. They are the best band to come out of Leeds since the Sex Maniacs. (5)

XFist Records

Hero Dishonest – When The Shit Hits The Man

This is the fourth LP from these Finnish maniacs. It is more polished than the previous outing 'Let Your Poison Scream', and they are down to one vocalist. However this has not compromised the output; angry hardcore punk, featuring killer guitar licks bridging the tracks together, leaving me thinking 'how did they come up with that?' Hardcore punk with personality and love, one of Finland's best. (5)

Sabotage Records

Riistetyt – Skitsofrenia

This is a re-release of a classic Finnish hardcore punk LP. Raw and angry! (4)

Hohnie Records

Ruidosa Inmundicia / Solid Decline – Split 12"

RI (from Austria/Chile) gives us 10 tracks of unrelenting fast, fast, fast hardcore punk, complete with angry female vocals, sung in Spanish. SD (from Germany) gives us 14 tracks of unrelenting fast, fast, fast hardcore punk, complete with angry male vocals, sung in German. To say these bands complement each other well is an understatement. (5/4)

Thought Crime Records

Strong As Ten – S/T

Fast hardcore from Northern France for fans of Valhalla Pacifists. Their incredible live sound transcends beautifully onto vinyl. 13 tracks here for you to get your teeth into, complete with Black Flag and Infest covers. (4)

Various Labels

Tragedy – Nerve Damage

The most popular crust punk band on the planet return with their third full-length record. There

is no change of direction here; it's more of the same, yet with the band being so damn good, there is no need for them to change. Relentless heavy crust punk with melodic interludes and shifts in tempo, hardcore punk at its best! Comes in a gatefold sleeve with a large bird sprawled across the front; exactly what it says on the tin. (5)

Tragedy Records

Unkind – Ei Mitaan

This is dark and rocking crusty punk d-beat from Finland, and it is the band's best work to date. (4)

Combat Rock Industry

Various Artists – Propaganda is Hippies

This is a Finnish Hardcore Punk Compilation featuring, Kieltolaki, Viimeinen Kolonna, Vaarinkasitys, Totuus, Sotatila, Omaisuusvahinko, and Yhteiskunnan Ystävät? A great start for anyone wanting to hear the cream of the crop of 80s influenced modern Finnish hardcore punk. (4)

Kamaset Levyt Records

The Wankys – The Very Best Of Hero

This is distorted noise punk at its best. I bet these guys wish they had a Finnish mother and a Japanese father. This ain't for the faint hearted. There are hilarious song titles and lyrics to boot. This is the closest sound you will get to post-bomb Hiroshima. (4)

La Vida Es Un Mus Records

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